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***WILD ON POLYHEDRON!***

*Hunting in Roleplaying*
*Wilderness Encounters*
*Play Mutated Wild Animals!*

***Wild and crazy members always fill out the readers' survey!***

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# interested in becoming a RPGA® Regional Director?

Are you an active RPGA member? Do you coordinate conventions and game days? Are you interested in introducing the roleplaying hobby to new people? Want to make some extra money? If you said yes to all of these questions, you may be made of the right stuff!

The RPGA is always looking for good candidates for a Regional Director (RD) position. We have some openings coming up, and could use your help. RDs serve the members in a given geographic region by helping them find other gamers, answering questions about the RPGA, assisting conventions with running RPGA games, and keeping the members in the region informed of local RPGA happenings through the publication of a bi-monthly newsletter.

The RPGA Regional Director position is loaded with rewards. You will have the satisfaction of being one our emissaries of goodwill and good gaming. You will also be given a plethora of support materials.

**Benefits**

- Free GUILD-LEVEL™ membership for as long as you remain an RD.
- Free admission to the GEN CON® Game fair.
- Travel expenses paid to WINTER FANTASY™ This convention, held in January, is the kick-off point for the RPGA for the year. The annual RPGA Summit is held in conjunction with WINTER FANTASY.
- Be paid an annual sum of $4,000. This will be on a contract basis and paid in quarterly installments in association with quarterly evaluations of performance.
- Some convention travel and RD-related expenses reimbursed.
- The satisfaction of helping people discover or grow in a hobby you love.

**Requirements**

- Must have enthusiasm for the RPGA Network and for the roleplaying hobby.
- Must be a proactive self-starter.
- Must be available to commit up to 10 hours per week to these duties.
- Must have good writing skills and be able to produce a bi-monthly Regional Newsletter.
- Must have good interpersonal and management skills, and be able to inspire work from others.
- Must have an email account which handles file transfers, and World Wide Web access.

The RD can be involved in the running of conventions, but cannot at any time put the interests of their conventions above the interests of the Network.

If you are interested in applying, please send a cover letter of interest and your resume to:

Attn: RD Applications
Email: RPGAHQ@wizards.com
Snail Mail: RPGA RD Applications,
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Renton, WA 98057-0707

RPGA NETWORK

# THRILLING POLYHEDRON ADVENTURE

10¢

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# erik's editorial

*APRES MOI, LE DELUGE*

After this issue, everything changes. For more than a year, now, we've been tinkering with ideas on how to improve *Polyhedron*.® When I took over the magazine, with the now famous #138 (which, I am proud to say, recently sold on eBay for the princely sum of $0.62), I started off this column asking that very question. How do we build a better magazine? Recently, I posed the same question to the RPGA® Network message board at www.wizards.com and the fan site maintained at www.rpga.net. All of the responses got tucked away into a little idea file, to be used when the time was right.

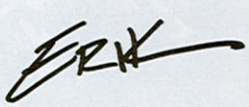
Starting with the next issue, #144, that time has arrived. The last year has seen phenomenal growth in RPGA membership. Both Guild-level™ and Fellowship-level™ member counts have doubled, and we're fast approaching an all-time record in paid memberships. It's safe to say that, by the time *Polyhedron* #144 ships, more people will be members of the RPGA than at any time in history.

And that, we think, calls for something special. Starting in November, *Polyhedron* will double in size. As the RPGA is a global organization, with branches in North America, the United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia, the magazine will be sent to all members everywhere in the world, with local information broken down by branch. The balance of the magazine will contain the same types of quality articles you've come to expect, written by members and industry professionals. We've commissioned beautiful color paintings by some of the most talented artists in the industry. Oh, yeah. And it'll be full-color. Every single page.

How can you contribute to the new *Polyhedron*? As always, send your comments and criticisms to us at polyhedron@wizards.com or *Polyhedron Magazine*—RPGA Network/P.O. Box 707/Renton, WA 98057-0707. Interested in contributing articles to the magazine? We'd love to hear from you at the same address. The additional space means we have room for slightly longer articles. It definitely means that we have the opportunity to broaden our focus to include many different roleplaying systems. Though the new *Poly* will contain a goodly number of Dungeons & Dragons® articles, it's not an exclusively D&D® magazine. Our members enjoy many different games, and the pages of *Polyhedron* will be open to content discussing those games in a way it never has been before.

With participation at an all-time high, our Living™ campaigns reaching the climax of intriguing storylines, the Clubs Decathlon as competitive as its ever been, and the new *Polyhedron*, it really is a great time to be a member of the world's largest organization of roleplaying enthusiasts. *Polyhedron* is our common point of contact. We intend to treat it well. But I can't stress enough that this is *your* magazine, too. A lot of changes are ahead. Some of them, you'll love. Others, you might not be so sure about. Let us know how you feel by dropping us a letter in the mail, sending us an email, or tracking us down at Gen Con. We're looking forward to hearing what you think.

Thanks for reading,



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## *The Living Greyhawk™ Journal*

By now, chances are you've seen our preview issue (#0) of the *Living Greyhawk™ Journal*, either packaged with the August issue of *Dragon Magazine* or stuffed in your bag of goodies at Gen Con. The first "real" issue of the magazine arrives in your mailbox next month. The *Living Greyhawk Journal* is the official magazine of our newest international shared-world campaign. Sent to members on *Polyhedron's* "off-month," it will provide campaign updates, NPCs, rules addenda, and news from the Regional Triads, local members who manage the campaign on a regional level. Issue #1 will contain an in-depth look at the Kingdom of Keoland, one of Oerth's oldest nations, a spotlight on the rulership of the matriarchal city of Hardby, and a glimpse into some of Oerth's most mysterious locales. We'll also kick off the campaign with a contest that will allow you to ask for "anything" for your character, no strings attached. Sound cool? It is. Thirty-two pages in October, with a brilliant cover by Brom.

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# notes from HQ

## SOMETIMES WE MAKE THINGS HARDER THAN THEY ARE

You're running a convention, and you have all these big plans, and suddenly the problems start.

"Hey Robert, the wife of the guy running the miniatures just had a baby, and he cannot make the show."

"Hey Robert, two dealers just backed out, and we have to sell their spaces."

"Hey Robert, the guys at RPGA® haven't sent the prizes yet, and the show starts tomorrow."

"Hey Robert, ..."

By now, Robert is going crazy. He is being pulled in four different directions, and still has to print the LIVING CITY™ certs and pick up the buttons for the badges and pick up the onsite books at the printer. His poor wife despairs of ever seeing him, and his stress level goes through the roof. After the con, if there is an after the con, he will have to take vacation and possibly become a hermit. He's certainly not going to be suckered into doing the con again... at least not until two weeks after the con this year. What happened?

All Robert wanted to do was run a fun game day for some friends to play D&D together. He was going to hold it at his house. Then someone in the game group suggested that maybe they run a couple Living City slots and see if they could get some new people into the game group. Sounded like a good idea, but the house wasn't big enough. So Robert started looking at churches and schools and small hotels. Then, some of his friends said that they would help out if the games became a convention, because his town does not have conventions. Suddenly the group had to do marketing, and pre-registration, and sell vendor space (so people could buy game supplies; "we'll just ask a couple local stores to come in"). Then his event appeared on the RPGA calendar, and suddenly people he did not know were asking about attending. A lot of people. This is what the group wanted, but suddenly expectations went up again. With so many people coming, we should probably arrange for some other games, because we can't run enough roleplaying slots for these people with the few GMs that we have. So the group added some board games, a LARP (because the LARP club begged to come), and a Laser Tag game that everyone thought would be really cool.

Suddenly, the facilities Robert had been looking at were not big enough, and he had to find a larger hotel or community center. And the cost went up. Now the group really had to market the show, and get more people to attend, because the group members could lose a lot of money if too few people show up. More space is allocated for dealers, so more potential dealers must be contacted. Someone knows a guy with an anime collection, and he agrees to come show his videos if the group can get a TV and VCR into a room at the hotel.

By the time the con starts, the original group members are far too busy to play. Problems come up because they really did not plan for as big a show as they were running, and they stayed up late and got up early every day to make the attendees happy. Tempers on the staff frayed, and people who were really good friends did not really want to see each other for a while once the show was over. The LARPers destroyed part of the hotel, but later it turned out that one of the RPG tables did that and the LARPers were innocent. But two staff members spent hours figuring out the truth, and a little longer pacifying the hotel and agreeing to pay for damages.

Finally, the show was over, and the original game group collapsed into sofas at the dead dog party. They then realized that they had lost sight of their goals, and really had not had all that much fun. What happened?

What happened was that suddenly, in the excitement of doing something cool, playing games together got harder than it needed to be. The original group just wanted to play some games together, and maybe attract a few more people to form a club. But their plans grew into a monster, just because everything sounded like it would be so cool. They made gaming much harder than it needed to be. This group might survive another year of the show, which they are now committed to doing because everyone had such a great time and asked when next year's show would be, but after that they will probably burn out. Some may stop roleplaying altogether.

The RPGA, at its heart, is about playing games. Members get together to play roleplaying games with other members. Whether this happens at conventions or in your home does not matter. You are playing games. The RPGA is not primarily about supporting conventions, or putting on conventions, or doing grand things that take a lot of work. The RPGA is about people playing games and having fun. Though we really enjoy putting on the occasional convention, or developing some new Living City program that you'll like, or starting a new campaign for you to play, we do all that so that members can play roleplaying games with their friends. And we'll continue to embrace big plans, and try to do as many cool things as we can.

But remember that we all can make things harder than they need to be. It is possible to do things without being crippled by stress. Don't let the work of gaming get in the way of playing games and having fun. The work is supposed to enrich the fun, not detract from it. My advice this month is that you remember to have fun, and notice when you are not having fun so you can figure out why and do something about it.

Until next time, have some fun.

Robert

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# member spotlight

BY STEPHEN H. JAY

## CRAIG ANTONY WALKER— A GAMER FROM DOWN UNDER

**How long have you been gaming?**

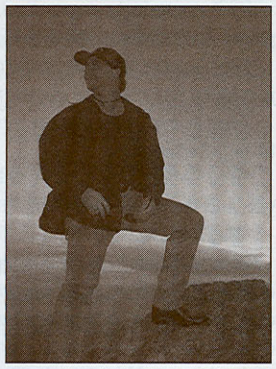
You know that feeling you get when you're suddenly presented at a gaming table with people young enough to be your children? That's a scary thing-I say nothing more. I've been gaming since about 1979. I had just graduated (oops that gave it away), and some people I was sharing a house with introduced me to gaming. They introduced me to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS(r) (the little books, original version). It was like make-believe and live improvisational drama and you could continue the story in an episodic format week after week after week. To be honest, those episodes were highlights of the week. Then came the sci-fi blockbuster: "Traveller" and life was never the same. I went to University and gamed regularly in "The Blue Room" at the upper campus library and then at various locations all over Sydney. I ran my own gaming groups that were fairly well regarded-or so I was told, but of course that could have been a ploy for more XP. Then, in 1983 I was introduced to conventions. Oh My God. Well, I was seriously hooked when I discovered them. Sydney ran a couple and there was a huge one in Canberra called CanCon. At these conventions were people whom I met and gamed with for many years-people who I looked up to and astonishingly enough became a peer of. Again, this could have been just a ploy for more XP.

**Where do you live? How did you get started in the RPGA® Network?**

I live in Leichhardt (an inner city suburb of Sydney, Australia, not too far from the beaches and the sun and the sand) also known as "Little Italy." Joining the RPGA? I have a patchy memory of when I first signed up, though I know it was in 1990. I remember a guy at a CanCon telling me about a gaming club which was worldwide. . . although it was based in the USA. He also told stories about Gen Con(r) Game Fair-a convention that boasted 20,000 attendees. I wanted to go. I thought it wouldn't hurt to be a member of the "gang," so I joined up. The tyranny of distance from the US to Australia means that there is a LOT of work that needs to be done to keep members interested in the RPGA here in Oz (Australia). The person who cajoled me into joining is someone I have a lot of respect for, (Unca) Wes Nicholson. He introduced me to the RPGA, Virtual Seattle, and Gen Con.

**Are you active in the RPGA in your area?**

The RPGA in Australia is patchy at best, regardless of the fact that Unca Wes pours heart and soul into it and travels constantly to tout the organization. So I am active in that I play as many RPGA games as I see and I go to conventions and I help out when I get the chance. I also "sell" the RPGA to as many people as I can and thanks to someone else whom I respect in the RPGA (Claire Hoffman), I am the regional coordinator for the Living Death™ campaign here in Australia. It means that I have a reason to be able to say: Here! Try this and we can organize something about it. Living Death has been a hard sell, as the original AD&D® system is only marginally popular here, so we play the games in a somewhat modified manner. Let me explain: In 1982, some Australians got together and wrote. My understanding is that freeforms (interactives, LARPs) got their start here and were taken to the US, where you guys have taken to them like gangbusters.



What has that to do with Living Death and the RPGA? Well you see, this "free-style" playing has become the dominant form of roleplay here, and many game systems have had to adapt to this form of play. So Living Death in Australia is a multiform campaign which is now slowly taking off. Horror is big in Australia (Cthulhu, White Wolf, Kult, etc...), so Living Death fits into that niche

**You were recommend by someone you met at Gen Con. What impressed this person is that you have been at the finalist table of the "Best Of The Best" competition two years in a row now, and you came all the way from Australia to play.**

Wow. Well, thank them for me. I never saw anything extra-special about being at that table-apart from the level of play and judging. It has been a great experience, and I love playing with those people. I guess the original invitation to play in the "Best Of The Best" came as a huge surprise. I mean, I play and I enjoy it—but I don't play for the prize. I play because I like it. Thus, when I was invited to play I was really flattered. I got through to the finals and that was great! Why come all the way from Australia? I don't get to play with these people in Australia. I was fortunate to be invited back again for Gen Con 1999 and happily accepted. I played and again was fortunate enough to get to the finals, where I was again playing with some of the same people as last year. Again, I had a hoot! That's why I come from Australia to go to Gen Con. It's also the chance to play with people whom I have never played with—at a level that is fun! It's a holiday, and I have to admit that I fell in love with Milwaukee and the Safehouse, too. ■

*Craig may be contacted at genre@yahoo.com and genre@tig.com*

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# So you want to run a convention?

BY PHIL THOMPSON

*TIPS FROM THE TRENCHES*

Over the last 24 years, I've attended more conventions than I care to remember. Most of them were positive experiences, while others were close but seemed to lack something in one way or another. Eventually, I decided to help organize one myself. Time slipped by, as it tends to do, and one day I looked back to see that the one convention I'd helped mold had turned into a decade of service. As a member of the Johnson County Tournament Society, I've had the opportunity to organize several conventions, and learned the ropes along the way. When I go to other shows, I'm often asked just how one goes about setting up a convention. After a quite a bit of thought on the matter, I've detailed some of the more important points below.

## DEFINE YOUR GOALS

What do you want to accomplish? Is your event going to be a game day, a small- or mid-sized convention, or are you planning on starting the next GEN CON® Game Fair? This is one of the most important things to know, because it will determine what you need in terms of preparation, support, resources and advertising. Defining your goal is important to set your plan in motion and, later, to determine if you were successful. Have a goal and focus on achieving it. You may later decide that it is not feasible or that you want to expand it, but you need to have an idea of what end result you would like before you start expending resources.

It should also be noted that if your group is running it's first convention, it might be more difficult to get advertising and attendees. You may want to run a smaller event at first and expand to a larger size with later conventions when the general public is more aware of you and you begin to build a reputation. Our first convention was rather small, but due to word of mouth, we had people contacting us for details before we ran the second one. By our third convention, we were well established and able to lend a hand to others.

## WHAT IS YOUR SUPPORT DEPTH?

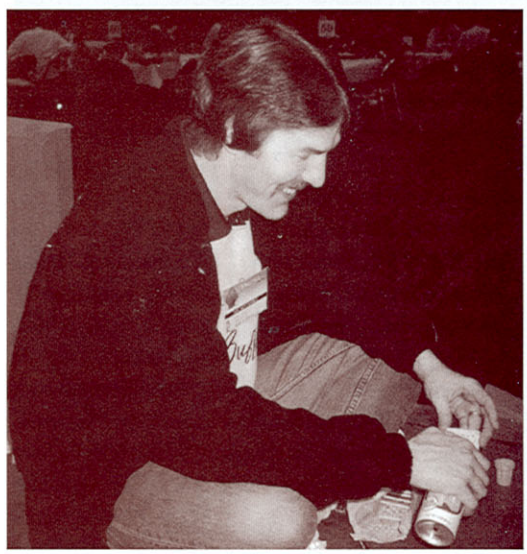
This is extremely important. Right from the start you need to know if anyone will be able to help you. If you're fortunate, you may be a member of a gaming club that will have members who can help with organization and/or judging events. It is possible to organize a convention by yourself, but it will take longer. You will definitely need some amount of help to run the show. I've seen cases where a group of interested people formed a club after they decided to run a convention. You can also seek support from other area individuals and organizations. As long as people are willing to work with you and will work constructively toward a common goal, there is no such thing as too much volunteer support.

## PREPARATION AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

Once you've set your goals and before you announce to the general public that you are planning a convention, you need to find a site that will be large enough to hold your show. Hotels often have large enough facilities, but tend to charge a sizeable fee for them. Universities are also a possibility, and can be cheaper than renting hotel space. Your town also may have a community center that will meet your needs. If there are other towns nearby, you should check their facility rates to see if you can get cheaper space.

Judges are a very important resource, and will determine the amount of people for whom you will be able to run games. Almost nothing is worse than a convention attendee who is bored because all the events are full and they have nothing to do. It is preferable to have more judges than you need. When you recruit judges, find out what games they like to play. If they play RPGA® Network games, ask them what LIVING™ campaigns they are familiar with, and what types of Classic scenarios they prefer. A knowledgeable judge who cares about what he's judging can be a big help to new players.

Printed material availability is also extremely important, because this will most likely be a big part of your advertising and if not handled properly, can be a major expense. If at all possible, create your own flyers and your convention program book. If you don't have a computer to set up your printed materials, check with friends, the public library, or university to use one of theirs. In a pinch, a typewriter will work, too.



*Feed your volunteers saltines and Easy Cheese,® and they will be yours for life.*

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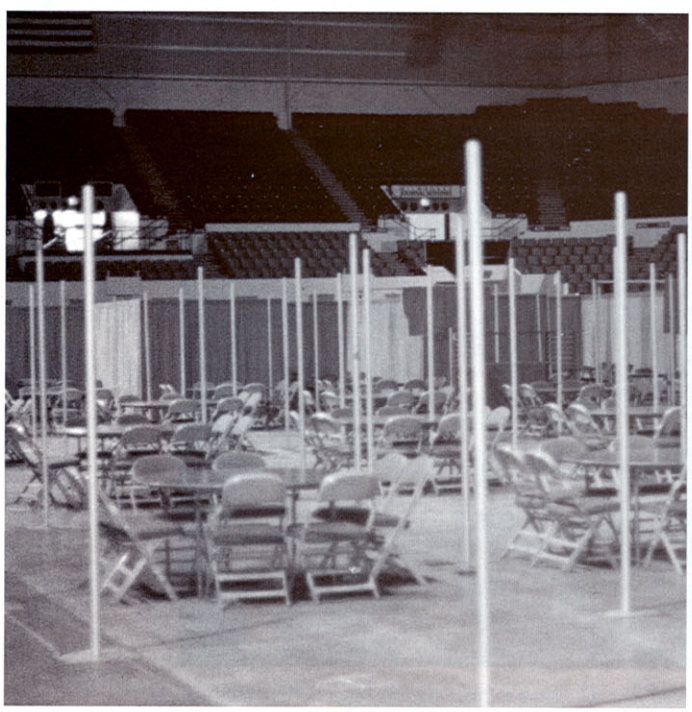
When you have an idea of how much printed material you'll need, check to see if anyone you know owns a copier and will let you use it if you cover the basic costs. If not, most copy shops have a lower rate to make bulk copies. Remember, it never hurts to ask for a discount. If you ask politely and look professional when asking, you'll have a better chance of getting it.

Web pages are an excellent resource to utilize. You can get Web space at user-friendly sites such as http://geocities.yahoo.com, www.netscape.com, and others. These places also commonly have low-cost or free tutorials to help you create Web pages. Web sites such Convention Listings by Jenga http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/ 4677/index.html, www.Jenga.com will let you list your convention for free.

## SET YOUR SCHEDULE

This is very important, as a good schedule can maximize space and a poor one can cause events to back up and disrupt the convention. Take a look at the events you are planning to host. If certain games are popular in your area and others aren't, try to schedule the most popular events in time blocks by themselves. Then you can schedule the less-attended events around the same time and get better space usage. If this is your first convention, you can contact others who have run similar games to see what their turnout was. One type of schedule that worked for us was a revolving one in which high-turnout events were regularly spaced apart and demo times and smaller events were staggered so that they typically started after the main event and finished before the main event did. That way, our staff was better utilized to help the attendees and in the case of single-elimination collectable card game events, there was usually something open when people were eliminated from the larger event.



*Always try to estimate the number of tables you'll need.*

Another thing to consider is the space requirements of the games you'll be running. Roleplaying events typically require round tables or two tables put together to give the judge enough room to see and interact with all the players. Collectable card games typically use rows of single tables and miniature games often use 8' x 8' (or larger) areas, and require space for moving around the table. You also need to allow aisle space to keep from disrupting games in process. Also, consider the noise factor. Some games will be louder than others. It is helpful to group games that need a lot of concentration together and possibly in another room and loud games as far as reasonably possible away from them. One way to manage noise levels is to put the miniature gaming area between the Roleplayers and the collectable card game players.

It is also a plus to have ample room for open gaming. This will give people who aren't in current events something to do during the down time. This also can be the designated space for players to mingle or eat without disturbing scheduled games in progress. Another benefit to having a large general crowd at the convention is that the people who purchase dealer tables (if you have them) will get more traffic and a better return on their investment. This should make them more likely to attend the next show and to put extra effort into promoting it.

## ADVERTISING

Allocating space in your convention program book for retailer and company advertising is an excellent way of generating prizes for your attendees. This helps advertise your show, because if retailers have given you funds or product to cover advertising, they are much more likely to promote your event in their shop and will tend not to schedule in-store events during the same time. Ask the retailers what games they are promoting and for which they would like to see events run at the convention. This will give them a sense of input and may prompt them to offer judges. If possible, try to get the local shops to work together to promote the event. One way to promote this would be to have a store team event. Each store fields a team and the winning store gets to keep a floating trophy until the next convention. This will help the local gaming community and make future events easier to run.

Another possible aspect to consider is co-op advertising. Co-op advertising is where a company will pay a portion of the retailer's advertisement in exchange for including their logo or other graphic promotion in the advertisement. When you try to get advertisement for your convention, make sure you bring this up with retailers, because it should be easier for you to get them to advertise if it costs them less to do so. Talk to the local copy shops about giving them space in your event book for advertising in exchange for printing the book. You may be able to get them to give you a lower rate to print your flyers, too. If your convention is in a hotel or similar establishment, you might be able to get a discount for your attendees to stay there while they attend the convention. If you can sell a large block of rooms, the hotel may give you a discount on renting your convention space.

Publications such as *Scrye* give free advertising space to conventions that feature collectable card game events. Other publications also will offer advertising space at a modest rate. Some local television, newspapers and radio stations advertise community calendar events that may prove effective. Publications such as POLYHEDRON,® DRAGON® *Magazine* and regional RPGA newsletters are an excellent resource in which to advertise conventions.

Local fast food restaurants and other businesses are a good resource to tap. These places frequently will have discounts, coupons, and freebie items available. At past conventions, we have used these for program book stuffers, door prizes, and in some cases used the program book as a way to get the attendees a discount at participating establishments. If you get coupons or freebie cards, make sure you put the convention name somewhere on them if possible. This will allow the store manager to see how much exposure they are getting from their advertising, and may prompt them to advertise next time. You also can trade advertising space for product to feed your volunteers and help keep morale high.

## SANCTIONED EVENTS

If at all possible, try to run sanctioned events. Not only will you have a better chance of getting prize support, but some companies will advertise the event on their Web site and in publications. Also, by running a sanctioned event you are advertising an established degree of professionalism. This is something that people who travel a good distance to your convention will look for and appreciate. Be sure to offer entry-level events in which new players can learn the game.

## GAME DEMONSTRATIONS

Check with game companies to see if they have a representative in your area to run game demonstrations. It is typical for official game demonstrators to bring free sample product to give out to demonstration attendees. This will give your attendees something to do if they aren't currently in an event and should increase traffic at the dealer tables if they carry the product that is being demonstrated. I've seen excellent demonstrators scout out the dealer tables before demonstrations so they can direct interested people to where they need to go to purchase the product.

If there is no company representative in your area, consider seeing if one of your volunteers knows the product and is interested in becoming a representative. This will make it easier for you to get support from the companies you want since it will be quicker to communicate with a local representative and they will know how to file the proper paperwork. It also should be easier to get larger events such as regional and qualifying tournaments this way.

## PLANNING THE NEXT CONVENTION

Before you plan the layout of your convention program book, it is time to decide if you will run another convention. If so, you can list the date of the upcoming event in the convention book. This is an excellent way to get return attendees. If possible, be set up to pre-register people if they wish to come to your next show. It is also beneficial to have flyers for the next event ready to give out. These flyers don't have to be extremely detailed, but do need to have the name of the convention plus the date and location at which it will be held, along with any other finalized information that you have. You should make sure to have a table for flyers and other freebies for your attendees and direct interested parties to leave such items there. Try to talk with other convention organizers who may attend (they're probably the ones bringing flyers) and ask them if they'll take your flyers with them to be distributed at their conventions.

Before the convention ends, get with your helpers, product demonstrators, dealers, support companies and contributing retailers to thank them for their help. Ask them if they would be interested in helping with another convention. If possible, set a date to discuss how the next convention will be run. Also take the opportunity to mingle with your guests and thank them for coming, too.

## HELPING OTHERS

As you become established, you will usually get requests for help and advice from others who want to run conventions. Take the time to help them out as best you can. A little help can go a long way.

## FINISHING UP

As the convention is winding down, take advantage of the opportunity to put away items (games, chairs, tables, etc.) that won't be used again. By doing this, you will save yourself time at the end of the convention and will be able to go home sooner. Visit with the remaining players as you straighten up. While you visit you can gain valuable insight on what went well (and what didn't) and what events could be added for the next convention.

Make sure you file tournament results in a timely manner. Your convention attendees will appreciate it. It is a good idea to make copies of the results and then send them registered mail so you know the company received the results and who received them. Some companies will not sanction further events if prior event result forms are late.

When you're finally finished with the convention and all the follow-up work, get some sleep! Believe me, you'll need it, because you'll need to start working on the next one before you know it. ■

Most convention organizers have come up with a few special tips and techniques to help their shows run smoothly. Share some of yours with us! Send your ideas on how to run a convention to polyhedron@wizards.com. We'll print the best letters, and throw some cool prizes at anyone who can shock us with a genuinely great idea.

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# A funny thing happened on the way to the dungeon

BY MATT HANCOCK

It seems that adventures taking place anywhere other than a city or a dungeon are a disappearing breed. PCs only leave the city to go from one place to another, and even then their time outside is described as "after three days of travel you reach your destination." This is surprising, considering the number of character classes that focus their skills and abilities on the outdoors. So, to give those characters a chance to shine and the rest of the party a chance to think, here are 50 encounters, adventures, and oddities to make your journeys a little more eventful.

1. The PCs are enveloped by a fog bank. After travelling for what seems like hours, they finally emerge from the fog. Right away they notice that almost no time has passed since they first entered the fog and that a valuable item/NPC/PC did not come out of the fog bank with them.
2. While walking through an arid scrubland, the PCs encounter a perfect circle of lush green plant life. When they journey to the center of the circle, they discover an overflowing water fountain. The fountain is ancient and carved with runes of a long-dead language.
3. The PCs hear a terrible noise coming toward them. No matter what they do, two dueling dragons quickly overtake them. When they notice the PCs, both dragons offer fantastic rewards in exchange for their assistance. For an interesting twist, make both of the dragons evil or both of them good.
4. The PCs follow a polluted stream that suddenly jumps, in an arcing spray, from its natural bed to a clearly manmade one. The new stream is clean and drinkable. If the source of the spray is investigated, the PCs find a crystal sphere that easily can be removed from the stream. If removed, the river returns to its natural (polluted) course.
5. If the PCs are carelessly traveling through a forest, one of them notices two bear cubs on the right and then hears a large crashing on his left. If the players are being careful, they can see the danger coming.
6. The PCs encounter creatures of great evil (perhaps creatures of animal intelligence from the lower planes) in areas in which they should not be found. Whether the PCs investigate this on their own initiative or because the authorities ask them to, this could be the start of a major adventure.
7. The PCs discover a freshly slaughtered caravan. While they investigate the remains, a unit of local soldiers arrives and makes the obvious (but wrong) conclusion that the PCs were the cause of the slaughter. If the PCs manage to talk their way out of being arrested, without killing any of the unit, they will be asked to accompany the guards and aid in the hunt for the real perpetrators (so that the guards can keep an eye on the PCs until their innocence has been confirmed).
8. A crow or vulture that always stays just out of bowshot shadows the PCs for several days. On the same day the bird leaves, an old man, who seems to know a lot about the party, asks if he can accompany the group until they reach the next town.
9. While the PCs journey through a forest, all of the birds in the area begin singing the name of one of the PCs for several minutes before stopping suddenly.
10. One of the PCs steps on an old bear trap, suffering 1d8 points of damage and trapping his or her leg. The trap is old, rusty, and requires a key to open it. Whether the trapper is still around and whether he meant to catch two-legged prey is up to the GM.
11. A subterranean creature has tunneled under the pathway the PCs are following, weakening it in hopes of having an easy meal drop in.
12. While travelling through a forest, the PCs are enveloped by smoke followed by intense heat. The forest is on fire. The PCs must figure out a way to stay ahead of the fire. For variation, try using a brush fire when travelling across plains.
13. The PCs are caught in a vicious thunderstorm. They will have to find/create shelter in order to survive the power of this storm. PCs wearing metal armor are especially vulnerable to the many lightning strikes. Any attempt to magically control or reduce the storm will twist it into a tornado.
14. The PCs enter an area that has no signs of animal habitation. This should completely unnerve PCs who have some knowledge of nature (rangers, druids, certain demihumans, etc.). The lack of animals also causes a problem if the PCs were depending upon hunting to supplement their food stores.
15. While resting in a swamp, the PCs awaken to realize the spot of dry land on which they camped actually floats, making it very difficult to determine their new location. Maybe the PCs were separated from their mounts or other PCs while the island drifted.
16. The PCs encounter a talking animal (type is up to the GM) that begins conversing with the party. In reality, the animal is just an animal, and a *magic mouth* or *ventriloquism spell* is the source of its speech. Its purpose is to distract the PCs while nearby bandits ambush them.

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17. The PCs encounter a unicorn (or other fantastic good creature) being captured by orcs. For variety, make the captors humans who claim to have a legal right to capture this animal.
18. The PCs encounter an injured woman in the late stages of starvation. If they take her with them they are attacked every night by some form of half-animal, half-human creature. Though it may appear that the woman is some kind of were-creature, in reality she is a latent psionicist whose extreme hunger has been given form and recreated each night. How the creature is stopped is up to the GM.
19. The PCs discover a primitive village (race up to the GM). While staying there an eclipse begins. The terrified villagers blame the PCs for the eclipse and attempt to sacrifice the PCs to bring back the sun.
20. While journeying through the mountains, the PCs hear a rumble above them. If they don't act quickly they will be engulfed in the coming avalanche (save vs. paralyzation to avoid being killed, another save to avoid being buried). Depending upon which way the PCs run, they will find either the way forward or the way back blocked. To be really cruel, make the avalanche a prelude to an ambush.
21. At a crossroads, the PCs discover a man hanging in a cage. He is half-starved and desperate to get out. He claims to be anything from an unjustly imprisoned man of importance to a beggar who simply owes a few coppers to be let out. His true crime is up to the GM.
22. The party begins crossing a field of flowers that have just come into bloom. The smell of the flowers has a powerful hallucinogenic effect on the party, requiring a save vs. spell every round in which they remain in the field (unless they somehow negate the smell). The flowers have an effect similar to the confusion spell.
23. A dead giant spider and its web are found. Its web contains the bodies of several creatures. One of them is a human messenger still carrying her important message in a satchel.
24. A baby, still in swaddling clothes, is discovered. If it is taken with the PCs to the next town the PCs will be shunned by the townsfolk. If a member of the town is pressed, the citizen tells the party that the child is evil and was left to die in the woods to prevent the evil from growing.
25. The PCs encounter a group of guardsmen escorting what they say is a dangerous criminal to justice. Later that day, the party encounters the slaughtered bodies of the real guardsmen. Further investigation of the scene reveals that the "criminal" was actually a person of great importance.
26. The body of a man pinned to a tree by an arrow through his head is discovered. There is an apple on the man's head and a hastily scrawled apology note pinned to his chest.
27. If the PCs are not taking care to properly store their food at night they find themselves besieged by an army of nocturnal scavengers (rats, mice, raccoons). To add some danger, perhaps a bear decides to investigate the smell of food.
28. The party encounters a dying druid who begs them to stop a band of humanoids who are defiling the forest. To pique the party's interest, the druid promises that the "forest shall reward them" when the PCs save it.
29. When the PCs enter an ancient forest they hear a whispered warning not to cut or burn any wood within the confines of the forest. If the PCs break the edict, they find themselves under attack by the animated trees of a very angry treant. Only some fast talking or hefty remuneration will deter it. To make it harder for the PCs to resist burning wood, have the weather take a turn for the worse.

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30. A group of lumberjacks find the party and ask the PCs to protect them from a crazy spellcaster who is trying to kill them all. The spellcaster is a druid who only wishes to drive the lumberjacks from his forest.
31. One or two PCs are the targets of practical jokes by a small group of faerie creatures. If the PCs involved react well, the faeries will eventually stop and may even reward the PCs for their patience. However, if the PCs react badly, the pranks will take a more serious turn and may even become lethal.
32. The PCs are lost in a swamp when they encounter a lizardman who offers, for a small fee, to guide them out. The lizardman speaks some common and appears very intelligent for his race. Whether he is honest or not is up to the GM. This scenario could work in any wilderness setting in which the PCs become lost.
33. The PCs weather a desert windstorm. When they crawl out from their shelter, they discover an ancient city that was unearthed by the storm. The city is full of old artifacts and knowledge but is not as uninhabited as it seems. To make matters worse, as the PCs explore they feel the wind starting to pick-up again.
34. The PCs find themselves in the path of a migrating colony of giant army ants. If the heroes do nothing, they will be swarmed by the creatures. For every round they are swarmed, the PCs take exponential damage starting at 1 (1 the first round, 2 the second, 4 the third, etc.). Fire and smoke will drive the creatures off, and immersion in water will wash the ants off any swarmed character.

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35. A woman whose face is hidden by a hood and scarf asks the PCs to share their fire for a night. She refuses to reveal her features, claiming religious reasons. She does not eat but describes a man to the PCs and asks if they have seen him. If the PCs answer the questions truthfully, she will thank them and move on. If they lie or resist answering, the woman will reveal herself to be an undead revenant, and will try to force the party to answer. For an added twist, make the revenant's victim known to the PCs.
36. The PCs happen upon signs of a recent battle. All of the bodies found have been stripped of arms and armor. If the party investigates the battlefield, they discover that all of the arms and armor have been used to erect a cairn in honor of a slain hero who is entombed within. Encircling the cairn is a ring of 12 swords driven point first into the ground. A message carved into the cairn tells anyone who wishes plunder to take one of the swords and to leave the cairn alone. If the cairn is disturbed or if more than one sword is taken, the swords will rise up, wielded by ghostly figures who attempt to drive the transgressors away. All of the swords have some kind of magical enchantment, and if the party takes a sword and returns, they discover that another weapon has replaced the one they took.
37. While journeying through a new land, one or more of the PCs realize that they are allergic to some of the local flora, something that is not native to their home clime. Reactions range from mild (sneezing, watery eyes, and running nose) to severe (eyes swelling shut, difficulty breathing, or anaphylactic shock). The PCs will need to find a local remedy to relieve their problems.
38. Bandits hurl bee's nests at the party as the opening to an ambush. PCs take 2 points of damage a round if they do nothing but attempt to flee or fight the bees; otherwise they suffer 4 points of damage. If the bees are ignored, the PCs fight with a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a +2 penalty to armor class. Heavily padded skirmishers engage the party while they are occupied with the bees.
39. As a nasty variation on 38, have the nests dropped by tripwire, with spellcasters waiting nearby to cast spells to increase the size of the bees.
40. While traveling through a forest, observant PCs will notice that the woodpeckers in the area have unusual patterns to their knocking. If the PCs listen closely, they determine that the woodpeckers are actually using some kind of simple code. The woodpeckers and their knocking follow the PCs throughout their time in the forest. If the PCs are attacked or vandalize the forest, the knocking becomes more intense and aid or opponents may soon arrive.
41. This one works best when the PCs are riding hard in an area with low visibility. A young girl steps out

directly in front of the PCs. They do not have enough time to stop, and ride her down. The last thing they see is her terrified face. When the PCs stop to look for her body, they cannot find it. They cannot even find the girl's tracks. A search of the area reveals the skeletal body of a young girl hidden in some tall weeds. Her skull has been crushed. If a person with tracking or medical skills examines the body, the imprint of the crest of a local noble family is visible on her skull. This family has the shoes of its horses marked with the family crest. Every night, the PC who rode over her ghost has nightmares urging him to bring her killer to justice, and tormenting him if he refuses to help.

42. While avoiding a blizzard, the party takes shelter in a cave. Once they enter the cave, they discover an enormous, hibernating cave bear. Nestled in the arms of the cave bear is a naked sleeping human child.
43. While the characters are on an important mission, with no time to stop, they see a dark, crumbling tower with storm clouds swirling around the top. An upper chamber seems to emit flickering candlelight.
44. In some mountainous terrain, the group is following a path along the edge of a precipice, high stone cliff on one side, dangerous fall on the other. The party hears noise from a distressed animal up ahead (a ranger, or anyone who makes successful animal lore check, can identify the sound as that of a bear). As they get nearer, they see a distressed bear and her cub milling about near the edge of the path. From their vantage point, the party can see that a second cub is stuck on a ledge 10 to 15 feet down. The cub's small ledge is crumbling, and the frightened animal's frantic attempts to scramble up the rock face are making it worse. The party can attempt to help, though the bears are blocking their path and the mother bear is not eager to let the party rescue her cub for her.
45. The party needs to cross a bridge that is being held by some creature that wants an exorbitant fee before allowing the party to cross. Perhaps an ogre for lower-level parties, a troll for mid-level parties, and a giant for higher-level parties. In a chivalric campaign, perhaps the toll-taker is an errant knight.
46. The party encounters a village or farmstead that is under attack from a creature they do not posses the power to defeat. There are plenty of innocents that need help, but engaging the creature directly would be suicide. The party should be rewarded for any heroics that might arise from the situation.
47. Through trial and error the party discovers that whenever they do a specific action (kill a spider, sing a song, whatever) it rains for the rest of the day. This event does not happen when the PCs are within a city, but happens consistently when they are not. When the PCs discover the action that causes the rain it changes a few days later. This may be a curse caused by the PCs' previous actions.
48. The PCs encounter pacifist members of a normally murderous humanoid race who are on a pilgrimage to a place reported to be safe for them. These pacifists are hunted by members of their own race as well as by the PCs' own people. If the PCs get mixed up with this group, they will have their hands full trying to keep them alive.
49. he PCs enter the territory of a powerful animal that they might not normally consider a threat (moose, hippopotamus, buffalo) but will quickly change their minds when the animal decides that the party should not be there.
50. The party encounters a massive stone obelisk in the center of a forest. The obelisk is covered with ancient runes and there is a crucified body on all four sides, pointing to the north, south, east, and west. If the runes are examined closely they appear to correspond to an ancient calendar. Through extrapolation, the party can determine that the date the calendar ends with is only a few days away. The obelisk is warm to the touch. ■


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# A hunting we will go

## HUNTING AND ROLEPLAYING

BY GREGORY W. DETWILER

Hunting is one of humanity's favorite sports. This is not surprising, since it's estimated that the human race was supported by hunting for 99% of its history. When more civilized times came along, the hunt became more than simply a means of gathering food and other raw materials. It became a social event, from good 'ole boys flocking from all over in their pickups to the local aristocracy banding together to chase a noble stag. The "Man against Nature" theme is a popular reason for many a human get-together. Because of this, the big game hunt is not only a valid wilderness survival scenario, it's also an opportunity for some serious roleplaying.

### THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME

The "man as prey" theme is by now an overworked cliché in literature, but that's no reason to discard it in roleplaying sessions. Of course, the deadliest hunter of Man is Man himself. The title of this section is taken from that of an old movie in which a jaded millionaire seeking new challenges takes to hunting human prey.

This is an excellent scenario for campaigns in worlds with powerful corporations running everything, such as Cyberpunk and Shadowrun. A modified version of this, the "literal" manhunt, can be used in games such as TOP SECRET.® You can even play it for laughs in Paranoia. The subject may not sound too funny, but actor Rory Calhoun once played this sort of character in a guest appearance on *Gilligan's Island*, so anything's possible.

Villains in superhero games do this sort of thing as a matter of course. The appeal of this scenario, no matter which side you're on, is that your enemy definitely has intelligence roughly equal to your own, making for a most intriguing battle of wits.

"Dark future" games such as Cyberpunk and Shadowrun are especially suitable for man-chasing-man-for-sport scenarios. What do you think jaded corp execs from Arasaka or Aztechnology do for a fun weekend? Of course, the presence of high technology poses some problems. Captured cyberpunks or shadowrunners might have their cyberware disabled before the hunt, to even the odds, unless the hunters have their own (probably better) chrome. This is a good test of your players' mettle, to see how good they are at surviving without their high-tech toys. PCs captured breaking into corp facilities may get an interesting proposition: take part in the hunt, and if you survive to the end of the day or weekend, you get to go free with no hard feelings. Crime bosses such as yakuza *oyabuns* may make similar "deals you can't refuse." Or, in a variant of the Shadowrun world's Desert Wars conflicts, runners equipped with cyberware from one corporation may be chased by hunters equipped by a rival corp; may the best chrome win!

If you're a GM with a one-player gaming group, and your one player decides to play a ranger or barbarian, this can be an excellent solitaire scenario. The local lord captures the PC and offers him his freedom, if he can escape him cross-country in either a one-on-one chase or a full-scale grand hunt like those noted later on. Alternately, a noble (good) PC of one of these character types could offer himself up for such a hunt in exchange for the release of a comrade or innocent captive. Because of their special powers, druids are much less suitable for this unless the opposition has powerful magic of its own. Remember, in this scenario, the object is not to wipe out the opposition, but to escape it.

### THE ANIMALS! SHOOT THE ANIMALS!

Naturally, when you get a lot of people together in one room—or forest—you have to reckon with the possibility that not all of them like each other. This makes the "master of ceremonies" job a thankless one in the best of times, but here the problem is compounded by the fact that everyone is armed. When you consider the fact that most hunting parties break up into small groups when actually on the hunt, or even separate into a string of isolated individuals, you have a potential murder in the making. The hunting equivalent to making sure certain people don't sit next to each other is not putting enemies in the same hunting band. On the other hand, it might be a good idea to have enemies together, as killing members of one's own hunting party makes one look suspicious. Someone whose enemy is in another band merely has the opportunity to snipe at him from behind cover, quite unseen by potential witnesses.

This is an excellent scenario for detective work, for a variety of reasons. First, unless he always carries a portable lab with him like the pulp hero Doc Savage, the PC investigator will have no access to the kinds of equipment he normally relies on for analysis. Second, the forest is a great place to conceal evidence, with caches of arms and ammunition being hidden behind bushes, saplings, etc. "Yes, Mr. MacSleuth, we can see that Lord Bromley was killed by a rifle bullet, but surely you can't suspect any of us! This is a fowling shoot, and as you can plainly see, all of us are armed only with shotguns."

The third reason, obviously, is that it is harder to keep the suspects together in the deep woods, even when they are not trying to actively evade you. Among many other

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things, this means an increased chance to either make a run for it or cause the investigator to suffer a tragic "accident" before he can solve the case. If the local wildlife is dangerous enough, the murderer might not even have to take direct action against our hero. "If only Detective MacSleuth had lived, he would surely have solved Lord Bromley's murder. What a pity that tiger showed up in the middle of our fowling shoot! Oh, well, such things happen here in India."

Always remember that murders can be either spontaneous affairs, as when a hunter catches his wife in the arms of another, or plotted well in advance. ("What a great opportunity to knock off the old man and take control of the family business!") In a modern-world game, where animal-rights advocates may try to hinder the hunt, the potential for a massacre by either side is obvious. (Sometimes modern animal rights protesters actually wind up inadvertently flushing the game out of hiding for the hunters.) In fact, either the activists or the hunters may be "most dangerous game" types, using the local wildlife as bait to draw human prey into the wilderness. Nonhuman hunters, like those in Vampire or Werewolf, may have the same motivation, while the latter may also want to keep hunters from "accidentally" stumbling across the local ancient cairn.

Of course, working together against Nature can create camaraderie as well as antagonisms, or even both at the same time. If a male and female hunter are thrown into close contact long enough, they may fall in love, which won't please any spouses or romantic rivals involved. Two hunters getting lost and working together to survive sounds like a great theme, but what if one of the two got lost on purpose? He may be setting up a murder, digging up hidden loot or buried treasure, or arranging a pick-up of crucial information by a fellow secret agent. You can combine this last with a combat theme to end the scenario with a wilderness duel between a band of skilled hunters and, say, a squad of Soviet Spetsnaz commandos. Woodland savvy vs. heavy firepower makes an interesting match-up, don't you think?

There are plenty of potential ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventures here. For the "murderous heir" scenario, simply substitute the local king or duke for the head of the family business, or possibly an older son with better rights to the succession. Anybody ever check up on how many rulers and heirs got bumped off by "hunting accidents" throughout history? Close calls are certainly common enough, going as far back in time as the Egyptian pharaohs. Certainly this scenario is a natural for the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign world.

For a more traditional "murder mystery" adventure, consider a Victorian hunting party in the RAVENLOFT®: *Masque of the Red Death* Gothic Earth game setting. When you consider that one or more of the suspects may be a rakshasa, lycanthrope, or similar monster in disguise, it is easy to see that this can degenerate into the sort of situation that Agatha Christie wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. In the same general time period, but a different TSR game, consider a "Wild West" hunting adventure in BOOT HILL.® Is that hunter on the other side of the buffalo herd who caused the beasts to stampede straight at your party merely a careless galoot, or does he have darker motives?

Wilderness adventures, including hunting expeditions, are generally considered to be separate from civilization. But expeditions have to be undertaken by intelligent, if not civilized beings, whether humans, elves, or aliens from

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space. Thus, normal "civilized" activities such as personality conflicts and murder can take place in the wild as well as anywhere else. Only the background scenery is different.

## THE GRAND HUNT

This is the large-scale hunt, or game drive; what the medieval French called a *gran battue*. Rather than simply (and tediously) stalking prey one animal at a time, an entire area is swept by hordes of hunters and beaters, with anything that moves being fair game. This sort of scenario can be used in any game that has animals in it, the Shadowrun sourcebook *Tir Tairngire* even mentions the elven nobility of that country hunting paranimals with medieval weaponry. Buffalo hunts in the Wild West, or game drives in India for the benefit of British officers, civilian officials, and local maharajahs in Victorian times (both in the Gothic Earth time period) are other good examples of this sort of thing.

In many cases, such hunts are a social event as well as a means of (in the *gran battue's* case) securing enough meat for the winter. As such, there are often restrictions, particularly on commoners. When nobles hunted boar in Europe, for instance, only the leader of the hunt himself could actually kill the beast, and then only on foot, armed with sword or dagger. In falconry, only emperors and kings could use eagles and the better hawks, with lower-class nobodies being restricted to birds of prey such as falconets, tierces, and kestrels.

A precise ranking of social class and bird from medieval Europe follows: Emperors get eagles, kings get gerfalcons or gyrfalcons, earls get peregrine falcons, noble ladies get merlyons or merlins, yeomen get goshawks, priests get sparehawks or sparrowhawks while their clerks get muskets (not guns, but male sparrowhawks), with the lowly knaves at the bottom rung of the social ladder being restricted to kestrels. Enterprising adventurers may make a living stealing the eggs and young of these birds to sell to others, but if they keep any for themselves, they should be careful to note the local customs. In a feudal system, just because you caught (or bought) it doesn't mean you can use it in the hunt, and this restriction in a fantasy world may well extend to birds of prey who are wizards' familiars or the boon companions of rangers and druids. Any wizard who wants his avian familiar to pay its own way by bagging small game for the pot had best hope no local forester catches him in the act.

When the hunt is a social event, commoners are present only as beaters and the like. Such service is in addition to their normal duties to their lord: a "love boon." It may also be called a "wet boon" if they are fed during it. Of course, such activities take peasants away from their farm work, and since most peasants are half-starved most of the time, the effort involved in fighting one's way through the woods can be prohibitively exhausting. PC landowners who like to hunt shouldn't be too surprised when the year's harvest rots in the fields because everyone's too tired to gather it in. PC or NPC landowners who want to draft the locals will have to do so via the time-honored "serve-on-the-hunt-and-avoid-being-ridden-down-by-my-knights" method.

Despite the purpose of the hunt (to kill animals), many of the better hunters actually grew to respect and love animal life. It was big-game hunters who started the movement to preserve Africa's wildlife (cynics called them the Society of Repentant Butchers), and hunter Teddy Roosevelt who founded Yellowstone and the American national park system in general. In some recorded cases, the hunter enjoyed the thrill of the chase alone, and actually got the prey in his sights before deciding to exercise the winner's prerogative of mercy by letting the "loser" live. If a bearer or companion is along to get tusks or body organs for material components in magic use, such sportsmanship can cause big trouble.

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British sportsmen, particularly army officers in the days of the Empire, are generally regarded as the quintessential good sportsmen. An officer on leave who wanted to go hunting was allotted a strip of wilderness and told in no uncertain terms what game he could and could not shoot. Killing the wrong animal earned him both a hefty fine and the scorn of his comrades-in-arms. If you're tiger hunting and you see a huge sambar deer with a trophy-winning rack of antlers, tough; it's off-limits for now. Oh, the temptation!

The sheer scale of some of these hunts can stagger the imagination. Tiger hunts in India, whether held by local maharajahs (the Maharaja of Surguja actually claimed a total bag of 1,150 tigers by the late 1960s!) or British colonialists, employed up to 3,000 trained elephants, 30-40,000 horses, and virtually unlimited swarms of human laborers, with bags of 30 or more tigers per hunt being quite common. Imagine the opportunity for getting lost in the crowd here, either accidentally or for some nefarious purpose. Tiger hunting was at its height in Victorian times, whether in a drive as above, or ambush hunting by waiting for the prey in a *machan* (treetop platform), where anything could come along. Masque of the Red Death players take note.

Since fantasy is still the single most common RPG genre, medieval-style grand hunts should be a good reason to plunge forth into the wilderness. If the PCs have political ambitions, and the gran battue is the social event of the season, they can't afford not to go, even if they hate to hunt. If your PCs are landowners themselves, they may hold the hunts as a means of making friends and influencing people (or arranging a little "accident" for a rival). If your alignment doesn't allow such treachery, you might still be able to eliminate a rival by revealing his own murderous plans.

Show him up by bringing in more numerous or dangerous prey than he does, and you may make an enemy of long-standing in the campaign. If you arrange the hunt, be careful you don't put known NPC enemies in close proximity!

Hunting down some creature that is making a nuisance of itself is another good reason for a hunt, and one that is tried-and-true from the beginning of fantasy RPGs. If a grand hunt is called for this reason, then presumably PC landowners have as much interest in eliminating this menace as everyone else in the neighborhood does. If they serve a local lord, then they will be under feudal obligations to help him curb this menace, just as they would be in the event of war. If they're hunting ordinary animals, there is little chance of the spoils of victory unbalancing the campaign. In fact, you would be perfectly justified in limiting their gains to a square meal or two, if the "love boon" is also a "wet boon." Always remember that feudal lords never take no for an answer.

Returning to Gothic Earth, have the tiger-hunting party, or at least the work force of beaters, infiltrated by a rakshasa—or an entire clan of them—and watch the players squirm as they try to root them out. After all, here we have a literal cast of thousands to deal with, every one of them a suspect.

## THE MONGOL HUNT: WAR AGAINST ANIMALS

Animal lovers often speak of hunting as a "war against nature," but only the Mongols of the central Asian steppes literally made it so; appropriately enough, as the hunt was a training exercise for the army as well as a means of gathering meat. This presents a fascinating backdrop for campaigns set in the orient, such as in the real of Kara-Tur, as presented in AD&D's ORIENTAL ADVENTURES.®

Anyone who reads the accounts of Mongol military campaigns will be struck by how often the enemy army is drawn or herded into a specific area for the slaughter. This

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is precisely the same system the Mongols used in the grand hunt. It was not just that their soldiers engaged in the hunt; they engaged in the hunt as soldiers, serving in the same regiments under the same officers as they did during times of war, the whole being organized as a regular military campaign.

The Master of the Hunt, who was generally either one of the khan's sons or a trusted lieutenant, would ride out during preparations to survey and mark off a region several hundred miles across. At intervals, banners or streamers were planted to indicate the starting point of each individual regiment, while the very center of this vast area was designated as the *gurtai*, the closing point of the hunt, where the actual killing would take place.

At the start of the hunt, the Mongol troops would surround the area and begin to close in, two deep, in a moving cordon. In addition to all the military gear they commonly used during warfare, the soldiers were equipped with large wicker shields as protection from the rushes of the animals. (Few Mongols, even those armored and equipped to serve as shock cavalry, used shields when facing human opponents.) Everyone would shout as he advanced, with horns and cymbals adding to the general racket. It would be considered a mark of disgrace for any man to allow an animal to get past him and escape the cordon; birds were excluded, of course.

In most cases, the animals simply fled toward the *gurtai*, where they were being driven. When they proved reluctant to move, things got more complicated. At this stage in the hunt, it was absolutely forbidden to use weapons to kill or injure any of the animals. Remember that the bulk of these hunts took place in the steppes country of Central Asia, where large game included not merely deer, antelope, wild horses, and camels, but dangerous prey such as wolves, brown bears, leopards, tigers (including the Siberian tiger, the largest cat known to still be alive), and wild boar. If a bear were to hide in its den, then somebody would have to roust it out again without injuring it. Ditto for a wild boar taking refuge among the brambles and thickets. If a tiger or a leopard were to climb a tree like any other cornered cat, somebody who wanted to show off his bravery could do so by shimmying up the trunk to force it back down again. Any animal that turned at bay and rushed the line of warriors must be beaten off with shields alone.

The line could not be broken for any reason. If one part of the advancing cordon was held up by some difficult terrain feature, such as a river, then hard-riding Mongol messengers would be sent to all the other regiments, warning them to slow down or halt until the others could catch up. A Mongol drive could easily take a month or more, with the khan watching the performance of his officers and men. At length, the mass of driven beasts reached the *gurtai*, and the killing could begin.

Even here, there were rules. By tradition, the khan himself was permitted to kill the first beasts. Also by tradition, he generally chose the most dangerous prey. When he was finished, those officers who wanted to demonstrate their bravery dismounted and moved in, taking on even bears and tigers one-on-one, equipped only with sword and shield. It was only after this stage that the order was given for the general slaughter, with each man moving in on the *gurtai* and killing whatever beasts happened to be in front

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of him. When the bulk of the trapped prey was already dead, a final tradition was played out: the children of the Mongol nobility would plead to the khan that the surviving beasts be spared. Permission would invariably be granted (one imagines they were not allowed even to get close to the khan until it was estimated the horde had enough meat to get it through the winter), and the hunt would end. It helped that the survivors were all cute and cuddly; the dangerous animals would all have been killed by now by those macho Mongols with something to prove.

Due to its very nature, the Mongol grand hunt has a number of built-in mechanisms to neutralize the abilities of high-level, magically-equipped PCs in an ORIENTAL ADVENTURES campaign. First, since the prey consists of ordinary animals, it seems reasonable that the use of such weapons as *swords of sharpness, vorpal blades*, and *arrows of mammal slaying* would be considered "unsporting" and not allowed. Ditto for spell use. Conversely, wu jen (wizards) might be restricted to using illusions of giant aerial monsters, flaming clouds, etc., to ensure that birds, as well as beasts, would be driven and confined to the gurtai.

Now we come to that nasty little part of the ORIENTAL ADVENTURES system known as honor points, wherein PCs can gain or lose honor for various actions. If things get so bad that a PC's honor points drop to zero or below, the PC is removed from play, presumably at the point of a self-inflicted stab wound. Remember that the Mongols considered it a disgrace for any animal to be allowed to break through the cordon. Assume a PC loses one honor point every time he lets an animal through the lines. If he is an officer he also loses an honor point every time one of the men in his unit lets an animal get away. You don't even need dangerous animals to make your players sweat. If a fluffy little bunny breaks cover from the surrounding bushes and streaks between your legs before you can stop it, you've just lost one honor point. If mages in a fantasy campaign use their magic against aerial wildlife, then the same goes for them if any birds get through the cordon. Remembering that suicide is the PC's only option when the honor points run out, you can see how easily a high-level party may be forced to do itself in due to a bunch of harmless, 1 hp creatures.

One last thing for fighter types, who will almost invariably be playing steppes barbarians: remember that this hunt is also a test of your ability to follow orders. If you injure an animal, you lose an honor point. If you break ranks in your excitement and blood lust and start killing before it's your turn, you'll probably take an arrow in the back—or a volley of them. If you continue killing after the hunt is officially ended, then you will be doing so after a bunch of little kids have just publicly begged your commander-in-chief to let the beasts go. In that case, you will not only be a bad soldier, but the Mongol equivalent of the hunter who shot Bambi's mother. Disobeying orders nets you a loss of 10 honor points.

There you have it: an historical example of how a grand hunt worked in practice. Nobody else employed the strict military discipline the Mongols used, but usually they had some rules. Even the Plains Indians, when engaged in the buffalo hunt, told off some of their more experienced warriors to act as hunt police and make sure nobody acted out of turn.

In all but the most urban settings, the most common reason for hunting will be for food. This will not change, whether the PCs live in an ancient or medieval world, the Old West, or as pioneers/explorers on a new planet far from the galactic core. The stomach comes before all else, and trifling details like historical period or environment will not change that. In fact, if you (the GM) are responsible for providing your players with munchies during the game session, you have a great opportunity to make things really interesting.

Just before the session starts, casually announce that, in the interests of roleplaying realism, you won't let anyone get anything to eat until the party has killed some game or otherwise gathered food. After all, why should the players gorge themselves when their poor characters are starving in the wilderness? It's hard for a well-fed player to roleplay well by getting into the mind of a starving ranger or other hunter-type. If you manage to survive the mob reaction that follows, you will have given your players a very interesting scenario.

In summary, the hunt is as much a social event as it is an act of grim necessity in the pre-modern world. No matter what gaming system is used, the referee can take advantage of this to ensure that roleplaying is no longer restricted to the urban areas, but is employed anywhere there are intelligent NPCs for the players to interact with. ■

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*A GAMMA WORLD® ADVENTURE*

# Fire Island

*BY MIKE SELINKER*

This bizarre ALTERNITY® adventure in the GAMMA WORLD® ®Campaign Setting takes place in what used to be Tierra del Fuego, the island area on the southern tip of Argentina and Chile. This area, also called Cape Horn, is where Magellan sailed through South America in his circumnavigational journey. In this scenario, Tierra del Fuego (literally, "land of fire") was the site of nuclear attack in the Cataclysm, and has no cities left in the area.

What it does have is a fulfillment of one of the most implausible conspiracy theories of the 20th Century, linking the first Holocaust with the second and potentially a third. After Germany's defeat in World War II, Adolf Hitler committed suicide. His body was never identified. Conspiracy buffs have posited that Hitler survived, emigrated secretly to Argentina with Nazi war criminals, and—this is the kicker—had his brain kept alive to be reborn when technology allowed. A little paranoid but, for this module's purposes, true.

Okay, here's what happened. Hitler was mortally wounded in the Battle of Berlin, and so authorized his contingency plan. After faking his death, he and Auschwitz ghoul Joseph Mengele were smuggled into a bunker deep beneath Tierra del Fuego. As the Fuhrer lay dying, Mengele removed Hitler's brain and suspended it in a life-sustaining solution. The Angel of Death then activated a primitive cyborg body—which failed utterly. Lacking the skills to go on, Mengele sealed the bunker, leaving therein both Hitler's brain and the only working model of the German atom bomb. The secret died with Mengele, whose body was found in 1985 in Brazil.

Flash forward at least a century. Tierra del Fuego's plains are still raging with fire from the devastation. Into this hostile environment comes the Makkiadorras. This cryptic alliance took its name from the Spanish *maquilladoras*, businessmen who exploited cheap Latin labor to reap profits in the West. The Makkiadorras took this strategy a step further: They conquer a village, work the people 'til they drop, then abandon them. The host people gain nothing from this deal, but the Makkiadorras gain finished goods from the victims' raw materials and free labor. This alliance is made up of humans, mutants, and androids—or at least it used to be so diverse.

When the Makkiadorras reached Tierra del Fuego after sweeping through what used to be Chile, they braved the fires and established a camp near what were once the Straits of Magellan, now rechristened the Straits of Majjik. A nearby village, Rio Gallegoz, was too large for the alliance to conquer, so the invaders decided to try to starve them instead. The Makkiadorras made a run for the village's food supply, a herd of legless bovines called vakas. But they did not count on the mystical and lethal properties of the Straits of Majjik.

As the war party attempted to cross, the Straits buffeted the band with waves of blinding light. Dozens died, and

## PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION (READ ALOUD TO PLAYERS WHEN YOU BEGIN)

Arjentina, the land of silver, is bred of the spirit of the plains drifter who lives off the land. This is a hostile country, this southern end of the Latin Continent. Your village is Rio Gallegoz, the only town for many days' ride on the plain. It has lived a peaceful if harsh existence, perched on scrub plains and a river overlooking the Great Eastern Ocean. The trackless wastes of Patagon run north, while a good ride south are the Straits of Majjik, whose panoply of dancing lights have led many a sailor to doom. Across those Straits is Terror del Fuego—the land of fire—where the rages of the Cataclysm still burn. Your town is an island of peace in this world of violence.

This peace has sprung from the cultivation of the bovine vakas. These legless herbivores levitate above the earth, radiating an aura of serenity to protect themselves. For years, your hunters could not approach them, overcome with calm in the vakas' presence. But then came a new class of men, the ranchos. These men emitted an aura of a different fragrance, one which repelled. A symbiosis developed between these auras, and soon the bovines could be slaughtered for food. The vaka herd runs the range half a day's ride south of Rio Gallegoz. It is important to keep the ranchos and herd away from the populace, as their mind-altering auras could prove disruptive. This has given the ranchos a superior attitude toward the townsfolk, and at times they have proven difficult to placate for their critical work. Still, the balance has worked for all concerned, allowing Rio Gallegoz to build something of a society.

Until now, that is. For two days, there has been no word from the ranchos. The elders worry, as foodstocks will last only a few weeks. To investigate the delay, your group has been assembled to serve Rio Gallegoz once again. Your group leader is Papa Gayo, a parrot psychic. At his side is Merzedeez, a human warrior; Vazkez, a mutant technologist; Delgato, a jaguar scout; Dezperado, a mutant enforcer; and his intelligent steed, Cabayeti. Vazkez and Merzedeez ride unintelligent armored horses called potros. The six of you now ride toward the rancho camp, where you are to find out about the food supply. If there is a problem, you must see to the safety of the herd, eliminating any threat to Rio Gallegoz. Time is of the essence, so you must handle this situation on your own. Your village's survival depends on you.

their leaders, the examiner androids Cortez and Garza, suffered massive seizures. Garza's memory was wiped, and Cortez suffered severe brain damage. The war party limped south to a base camp, their number cut in half. As Cortez raged over his ally's coma, he smashed a rock outcropping with his metal fist. The ground opened wide, revealing a tunnel into the earth.

Cortez descended into the shaft, unclear about the bent X-shaped symbols on each wall. He found the chamber with Mengele's notes, tools, and, in its state of suspended animation, the brain of the Fuhrer. Sealing himself and Garza's body into the chamber, Cortez taught himself German and absorbed the philosophy expressed in *Mein Kampf*. He used Mengele's science to implant Hitler's brain into Garza's body. To his shock, Garza rose again. Cortez appraised Hitler/Garza of the brave new world, which the dictator greeted with glee.

A week later, Cortez emerged with a smile, a book, and a new outlook on life—and death. Succumbing to the dictator's oratory, Cortez went forth among his Makkiadorras and instituted the order of the New Thousand Year Reich. His first act was to purge all the mutants from the band, killing some and banishing the rest. He then relaunched the assault on Rio Gallegoz for his new leader. Deducing that the Majjikal power was light-based, Cortez led his band across blindfolded with no ill effects.

They then attacked a rancho camp near Rio Gallegoz. The vaka-herding ranchos radiate a Hostility Field which counters the vakas' beguiling Fatigue Generation mutation, making the ranchos the only people who can reach the vakas to slaughter them. Thus, the ranchos provide food for a populace that hates them. When Cortez attacked, the ranchos surrendered after spotty fighting, and many succumbed to Cortez's hateful propaganda. Some joined the Makkiadorras, but not before a rancho spotted one Makkiadorra as a mutant. After Cortez dealt with the mutant, the Makkiadorras and ranchos then took the herd south across the straits.

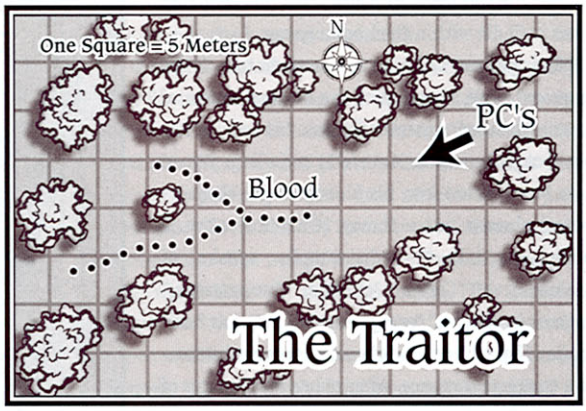
The adventure begins after the Rio Gallegoz populace realizes their food supply isn't coming. They send the heroes to investigate. The heroes will discover the burned rancho camp and should follow the trail back to the Straits of Majjik. Somehow, they must reclaim their animals and stop another Makkiadorran attack. Most likely, this will coincide with an underground nuclear explosion which dumps part of Tierra del Fuego into the ocean.

## ENCOUNTER SCENES

As long as the heroes head south, they will experience Scenes 1 (The Traitor Rodrigez) and 4 (The Straits of Majjik). They must intentionally go to Scenes 2 (The Rancho Camp), 3 (The Uranium Mine), 5 (The Makkiadorra Base), and 6 (The Last Reich).

### SCENE 1: THE TRAITOR RODRIGEZ

The heroes ride at midmorning through rolling plains with occasional large bushes and trees. It is 25 degrees Centigrade, not terribly hot for February in South America. The sky is cloudless, and the air is just as clean.




What may mar this picture is an ambush. The critically wounded Rodrigez has been expelled from the Makkiadorras. Exposed as a mutant by a rancho, Rodrigez has been branded with a swastika and left to die. He is no condition to make rational judgments, so he will attempt to destroy a group of heroes far tougher than he is.

Each hero not on horseback must make an Awareness—*perception* skill check to avoid surprise, at a +2 step penalty if the heroes are being chatty. (Cabayeti, of course, is not on horseback.) Any hero getting a Good or Amazing success notices a trail of blood through the savanna. Otherwise, the heroes are surprised. Rodrigez hides behind bushes 10 meters from the blood trail. He hurls a smoke grenade into the heroes' midst, providing 10 rounds of Good cover for +2 step penalties to attacks and Awareness checks.

After this, Rodrigez's options are limited. He has no other weapons save a ping pong paddle. He has complete cover behind the bush, but it's only a bush. He has suffered 7 of his 9 wounds, so the heroes can lay waste to the bush and Rodrigez in one round. Rodrigez will not go quietly, however. If threatened, he will gasp, "Back... or... death field..." He assuredly won't want to follow through on his threat to use Death Field Generation, because it will likely

**RODRIGEZ**
*Level 1 Mutant Free Agent*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 10 (0) | INT | 7 (0) |
| DEX | 8 (0) | WIL | 4 (-2) |
| CON | 9 | PER | 6 |

Durability: 9/9/5/5 — Action check: 9
Move: crawl 1 — # Actions: 1
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 — Last Resorts: 0
Mutations: Death Field Generation; Extreme Weak Metabolism, Minor Physical Change—spots

**Attacks**
Smoke grenade 10/5/2 d8+4 rounds smoke (+2 step penalty to attacks and Awareness checks)
Ping pong paddle 12/6/3 d4-2s/d4-1s/d4s LI/0

**Defenses**
-2 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks
Leather jacket: d6-3/d4-3/d4-2

**Skills**
Athletics [10]—*throw* [13]; Melee Weapons [10]—*bludgeon* [13]; Ranged Weapons [8]—*rifle* [9]; Stamina [9]; Survival [9]—*survival training* [10]; Knowledge [7]; Animal Handling [5]; Interaction [6].

**Gear**
Black leather jacket, smoke grenade, ping pong paddle, 15 gold pieces.

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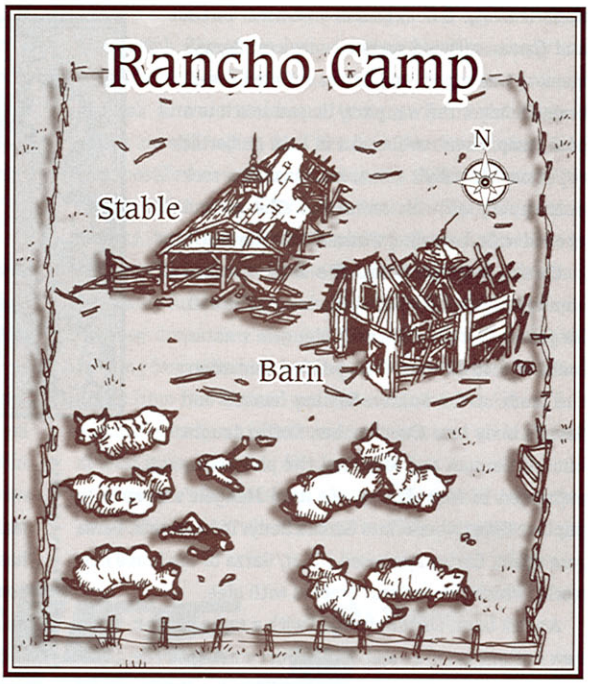
kill him if he succeeds. He knows that his blood loss means he'll die within the hour anyway.

If Rodrigez can be captured, he might talk. If the heroes get close, they notice the obvious causes of the splotch-faced mutant's distress. His left leg has been shot (reducing his Move to 1) and a large jagged X has been carved into his bloody chest. When he meets the heroes, he has at most 20 minutes to live. If coerced to talk, he disjointedly speaks of "Makkiadorras," "Cortez," "chamber," "no mutants," "fingered by rancho," "camp destroyed," "vakas," and "straits of light." Under no circumstances can he manage a complete sentence. After only a few minutes of speech, he'll collapse into unconsciousness. It might be possible to stabilize his condition, though he's unlikely to regain the ability to walk without aid. He'll never come with the heroes voluntarily.

Once the heroes deal with Rodrigez, they can head to the camp, which will take about an hour. They may also head directly to the straits, but they will miss details at the camp.




## SCENE 2: THE RANCHO CAMP

The heroes reach the camp an hour after leaving the ambush site. The land is overgrazed, with only grass shoots for acres. From a distance the heroes see a fenced area with two buildings, both badly burned. It will be obvious from the bloodstains and blast area that a firefight occurred. Two mutants in brown rawhide and seven burned vakas are the casualties. (A successful Investigate—*search* or Tactics—*infantry* skill check reveals that not much of a fight occurred; either token resistance was offered or the camp was nearly deserted when the fight occurred.) The trail of the surviving vakas is easy to follow; though legless, they leave levitational grooves in the ground.

Hiding in the charred frame of the stable are five meter-tall katkins of jaguarundi stock. (Jaguarundi are small South American wildcats with reddish brown fur. They are not at all like jaguars.) This family of cats came upon the

**JAGUARUNDI KATKIN**
STR 7 (0) INT 8 (0)
DEX 16 (+3) WIL 10 (0)
CON 9 PER 8
Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action check: 12
Move: sprint 27, run 17, walk 5 # Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2
Mutations: Increased Balance, Increased Speed, Enhanced Senses, Mimicry (allows imitation of any sound heard within 24 hours), Danger Sense, Empathic Reflection, Telepathic Reflection

**Attacks**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Claws | 12/6/3 d4s/d4w/d4+2w LI/0 | |
| Crossbow | 16/8/4 d4+2w/d4+2w/d4+1m | LI/0 |
| Fire extinguisher | 16/8/4 | |
| Stamina—endurance skill check or d6+6s and +4 step penalty to actions for d6 rounds | | |
| Air rifle | 16/8/4 d6+1s/2d4+1s/d4w | HI/0 |
| Bow, short | 16/8/4 d4w/d4+2w/d4+3w | LI/0 |
| Shuriken | 12/6/3 d4s/d4w/d4+1w | LI/0 |

**Defenses**
+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

**Skills**
Athletics [6]—*climb* [16], *jump* [12], *throw* [12]; Unarmed Attack [6]—*brawl* [12]; Acrobatics [16]*—*fall* [18]*; Manipulation [16]; Ranged Weapons [10]; Stealth [16]—*hide* [18], *shadow* [18], *sneak* [18]; Awareness* [10]—*intuition* [14]*, *perception* [14]*; Investigate* [10]—*track* [15]*; Interaction [6]—*charm* [10].
* -2 step bonus due to mutations.

**Gear**
Weapons as above, pouches, combs, pens, flashlights, canteens, tobacco tins (all stripped from the ranchos' bodies).

**ECOBOT (HRMI)**
STR 18 (+4) INT 14 (+2)
DEX 8 (0) WIL 10 (0)
CON 20 PER 0
Durability: 20/20/10/10 Action check: 13
Move: treads 16, burrow 2 # Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2
Mutations: None

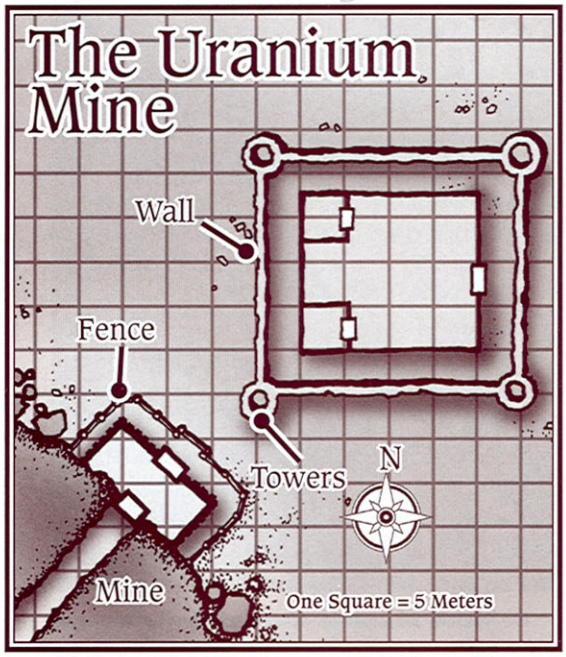
**Attacks**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Vibro dagger | 20/10/5 d4+5w/2d4+4w/d4+5m | En/G |
| Shovel | 18/9/3 d4+5s/d4+4w/d4+5w | LI/0 |
| Tranquilizer gun | 10/5/2 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s | LI/0 |
| (CON feat—see Pharmaceutical, anesthetic) | | |
| Chemical foam | 10/5/2 d4-1s/d4s/d4+1s | En/G |
| (smothers radiation and prevents leakage) | | |

**Defenses**
Body armor: d6+2w/d6+2w/d6+3w
+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
Not affected by encounter skills, mental attacks, or radiation

**Skills**
Melee Weapons [18]—*vibro dagger* [20]; Ranged Weapons [8]—*tranquilizer gun* [10]; Manipulation [8]; Computer Science [14]—*hardware* [15]; Demolitions [14]; Knowledge [14]—*ancient language* [15], *ancient lore* [15]; Life Science [14]—*biology* [20]*, *botany* [20]*, *zoology* [20]*; Physical Science [14]—*chemistry* [20]*; Technical Science [14]—*artifact knowledge* [18], *repair* [15].
* instrument pack lessens complexity of checks against these skills by one grade.

**Gear**
100-liter tank of leaded chemical foam, sensor gauntlet, Geiger counter, shovel, infrared goggles, videorecorder, comm gear, spotlight, toolkit, vibro dagger, antiradiation serum, tranq gun with anesthetic, smart trauma pack.




camp as the Makkiadorras left, and have taken it over. They thus deem the camp and dead vakas their property.

Approaching heroes hear a cross between an "ahem" and a "meow." The five katkins, all wearing bandannas, curl around the posts and rafters, pointing weapons at the heroes. Father Mwrowr holds a crossbow, mother Frrowr bears a fire extinguisher, and the children Preowr, Wmmowr, and Krrowr use an air rifle, shortbow, and shurikens respectively. If the heroes attack, they encounter quick return fire. The katkins will scatter before taking fatalities.

If instead the heroes hold their fire, Mwrowr suggests in his most intimidating purr that the heroes should leave him and his jaguarundi clan alone. They defeated the humans, he claims, and now the heroes had best vamoose from the katkin camp if they know what's good for them. These lies should be countered easily, especially if the heroes offer the vakas. Some fur must be stroked, naturally, but the cats' bluster in the face of a superior force soon will fade. If the cats somehow chase the heroes away, they will yowl to the heavens in triumph.

If the heroes win over the katkins, they can pump the cats for information. The cats overheard the conversation between the men in black leather and the ones in brown rawhide. (They cannot identify the two groups further, except by pointing out the dead ranchos and, if present, Rodrigez.) Their Mimicry mutation lets them repeat the conversation like a tape recorder. They only caught the end, which they will repeat as banter. (The Gamemaster should run the five voices together at once, modulating tones to differentiate speakers. Melodrama is encouraged.)

Mwrowr: "...see the path of righteousness and purity?"

Frrowr: "They keep us slaves, workmen, when we should be kings!"

Preowr: "Yeah, kings!"

Wmmowr: "We won't be slaves anymore!"

Krrowr: "Moooooo."

Mwrowr: "Now you stand as men against the hated mutants!"

Frrowr: "As men!"

Wmmowr: "No more mutants!"

Preowr: "Um, mutants? But..."

Wmmowr (quietly): "Shut up, Chiko."

Krrowr: "Moooooo!"

Frrowr: "Quiet, all of you! We join the Makkiadorras!"

Mwrowr: "We welcome you, as we have through our thousand years!"

Frrowr: "Mount up, my brethren! We must drive the vakas!"

The katkins then make the sounds of 300 vakas being stampeded. They don't know what any of this means, as they merely repeat what they heard. They have no interest in joining the heroes.

**VARK**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 10 (0) | INT | 10 (0) |
| DEX | 7 (0) | WIL | 11 (+1) |
| CON | 8 | PER | 7 |

Durability: 8/8/4/4 — Action check: 8
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4, burrow 3 — # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Marginal/1
Mutations: Directional Sense, Enhanced Senses

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Musket | 8/4/2 | d6+1w/d6+3w/d6+1m | HI/0 |
| Mining tool | 10/5/2 | d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w | LI/0 |

**Defenses**
Racal radiation suit and helmet: d6-3/d6-4/d6, immunity to R1-R3 radiation, R4 becomes R3, R5 becomes R4
+1 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks

**Skills**
Melee Weapons [10]; Ranged Weapons [7]—*rifle* [8]; Knowledge [10]—*deduce* [11], *ancient language* [11], *ancient lore* [11]; Navigation [10]*—*underground* [14]*; Technical Science [10]—*artifact knowledge* [12].
* -3 step bonus due to mutations.

**Gear**
Racal radiation suit and helmet, musket, mining tool, 15 gold coins

## SCENE 3: THE URANIUM MINE

On the trail about six hours south is a fort which has a massive black jagged "X" painted on the side, similar to that carved into Rodrigez's chest. The fort abuts a barricaded mine entrance bearing the prominent warning pinwheel of the Radioactivists. Standing atop the fort are four bipedal aardvarks in grey cloth armor bearing the same symbol. They all carry rifles with wide bores. The vaka trail goes right up to the fort.

The mine is a uranium mine. The bipeds are varks, mutated aardvarks with a penchant for mining. Coopted by Cortez, they believe they've struck a deal of high value. They could not be more wrong. In true Makkiadorra style, Cortez has taken their dearest property—five drums of mined uranium ore—with only promises of payback. The payback, in true Nazi style, will be the slaughter of the varks and the confiscation of their mine. But for now, the varks stand guard over the mine, visions of wealth abounding in their eyes.

There are eight varks all told, four inside the fort. They wear Racal enviro-suits with the helmets off, and carry flintlocks. If attacked, they will defend the mine with an eye toward running inside it if things go badly.

If approached peaceably, the varks wave the heroes away, shouting sibilant warnings not to claim-jump their mine. One adds hesitantly, "For the leader!" The others then remember to repeat the phrase just as hesitantly. They

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will bluster over their coup, though even they don't quite get what they agreed to. They know they agreed to supply mined uranium, but not what they will get in return. They know the name of the bargainer, Cortez, and his organization, the Makkiadorras. They also know the Makkiadorras took a huge herd of vakas south across the Straits of Majjik, which they know have horrible blinding lights and are impossible to traverse.

They will share this detail only if the heroes offer some item as payment for entering their territory. This item need not be valuable, but it must have moving parts and be explained as being useful in mining. (It doesn't have to be useful, just explained as such.) The varks are paranoid, but confused by this belief system to which they've subscribed for convenience. If it is suggested that the Makkiadorras work to eradicate mutants, the varks panic and bemoan that they just gave purists the most powerful substance on the planet. If necessary, they explain that uranium is a radioactive rock which, if refined, can cause the same destruction that created Gamma Terra.

If this comes out, the varks' first recourse will be to lock themselves in the mine until certain devastation passes. They won't join the heroes, but can give them a weapon, an ecobot that came with the mine. The robot, an HRMI (translated from Spanish, Radiation Maintenance Engineering Humanoid) model, is kept in a locked room, because it steadfastly refuses to obey or even acknowledge the varks.

**MAKKIADORRA THUG**
Level 1 Pure Strain Human Free Agent
STR 8 (0) INT 7 (0)
DEX 8 (0) WIL 7 (0)
CON 8 PER 6
Durability: 10/10/4/4 Action check: 9
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 # Actions: 1
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 Last Resorts: 0
Mutations: None

**Attacks**
Bolt-action *rifle* 9/4/2
d6+1w/2d4+1w/d4m HI/0

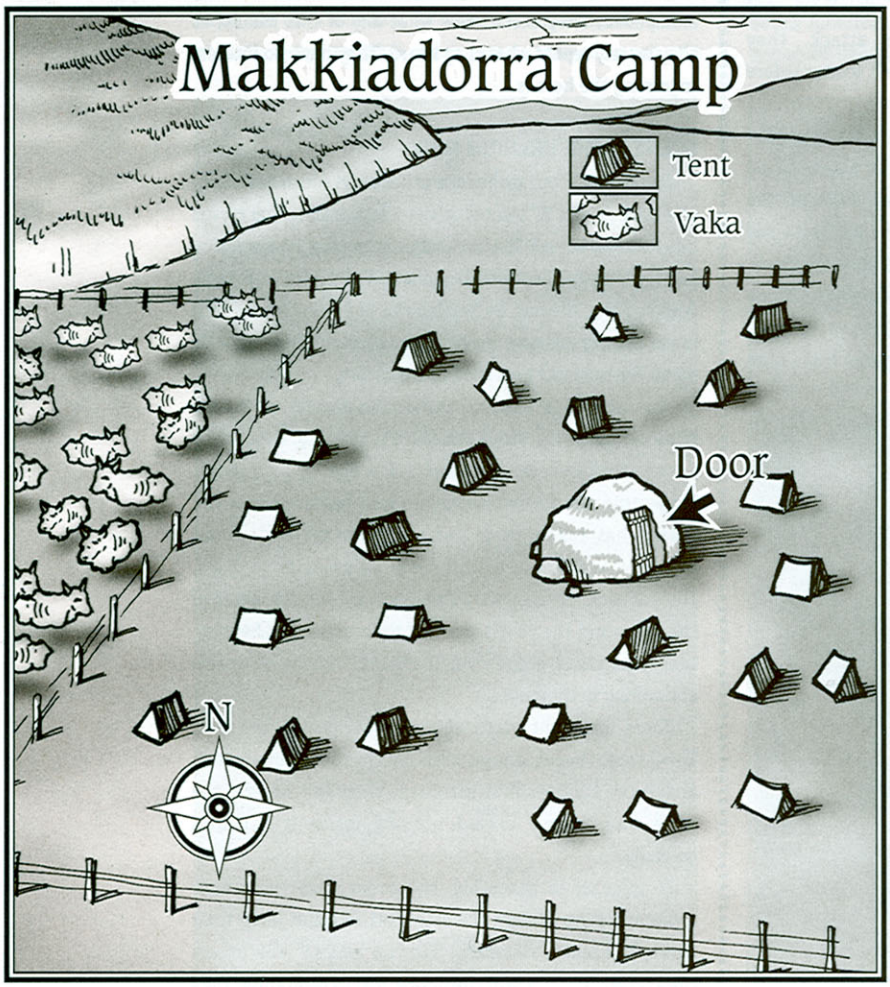
**Defenses**
Leather jacket: d6-3/d4-3/d4-2

**Skills**
Athletics [8]; Unarmed Attack [8]; Melee Weapons [8]—blade [9]; Ranged Weapons [8]—*rifle* [9]; Stamina [8]; Knowledge [7]; Animal Handling [7]; Awareness [7]; Interaction [6].

**Gear**
Black leather jacket with swastika armband, bolt-action rifle with 20 shots, 20 gold pieces.

The "Hermie" is humanoid with four arms and no self-preservation instincts whatsoever. Its assigned task, pending further instructions from a human, is to make certain radiation does not escape from the mine. Any human can instruct the Hermie as long as he or she has the radio that rests on the robot's head. It does not respond to mutated animals or plants, and will try to corral any such creature unless commanded to the contrary. It speaks in a monotonous drone, spouting endless lexicons of environmentally correct propaganda. It will physically prevent any person from littering, causing fires, or releasing radiation, unless directly commanded not to.

Other than the Hermie, the fort contains little of interest other than empty uranium drums, eight extra Racal suits, and metal mining tools (a.k.a. clubs). The sealed lead entrance chamber of the mine serves as a decontamination room, eradicating any active radiation when both doors are closed. The inner door can only be opened when the outer door is sealed. Anyone entering the mine is bombarded with R3 radiation. (The Racal suits offer complete protection against this.) The uranium takes days to mine, and cannot be refined on site.




## SCENE 4: THE STRAITS OF MAJJIK

Seven hours south, the heroes note a multi-hued glow and the roar of a distant sea. As they reach the Straits of Majjik, they see a dance of wild lights on the water about five meters below the land line. It is bright but harmless to those without Light Sensitivity or mutations that alter senses (such as those of the varks). The trail leads to the shore, where the herd stopped for a time before somehow crossing.

The straits are dangerous to those trying to cross, whether under, on, or over the water. The lights attack the optic nerves of anyone crossing the water with eyes open (assuming the being has optic nerves). On every round of assault, the victim suffers a Telepathic Blast as if the straits have a Personality of 12. On an Amazing result, the Mindwipe attack also affects the victim. Each round of attack, the straits get a cumulative -1 step bonus to the roll. Resistance to mental attacks modifies this roll. A hero incapacitated by this wave likely will collapse and drown.

Any creature wearing a tight blindfold doesn't suffer these effects. Closing one's eyes is sufficient, but the GM can require Willpower feats to keep the eyes shut when facing such a torrent. Of course, those who can't see can't navigate the straits. The waters rush west at 15 kph, so being swept away is a real possibility. Movement—swim skill checks allow control in the water; failure means the hero is dashed against rocks for 2d6 points of damage. The GM must adjudicate attempts to cross, such as the likely successful tack of asking the ecobot to guide the group across.

The heroes need conveyance to cross. An Investigate—*search* skill check may find grooves heading east, as three vakas wandered off as the Makkiadorras undertook the massive cow-blindfolding operation. They now levitate while asleep, about a mile from the launch site. They can be captured if not awakened, but when awake, their Fatigue Generation triggers. In a 5-meter field, everyone except those with the Hostility Field or Telepathy-resisting mutations is overcome with calm. So amid three vakas' auras, a hero could suffer 3 points of fatigue damage and 3 points of stun damage a round. The robot is immune to this aura. If corralled, the vakas follow any leadership, and even let themselves be blindfolded and ridden. Each vaka can bear two humans, but of course horses can't ride cows.

If the heroes don't want to cross the straits here, they can follow the shore east or west. The eastern route leads to the sea, where a boat is needed to cross. The western route can be followed for three days until the straits become un-Majjikal west of the ruins of Punta Arenas, home to a tribe of 100 hoops who love having visitors—for dinner.

On the other side, Terror del Fuego has been blackened by years of constant burning. Tiny flaming firebugs dance about, unable to catch any new fuel source but too stubborn to quit trying. The firebugs merely are irritating, barely able to ignite a hero's clothing. This is akin to mosquitoes in a swamp—not lethal, maybe, but still no fun.

**VAKA**
STR 14 (+2) INT 2 (-2)
DEX 4 (-2) WIL 10 (0)
CON 10 PER 2
Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action check: 3
Move: stampede 12, levitate 4 # Actions: 1
Reaction Score: Marginal/1
Mutations: Levitation (constant), Fatigue Generation (constant while awake, affects all within 5 meters except those with Hostility Fields), Fadeout, Highly Susceptible to Damage (being cut across the throat)

**Attacks**
None

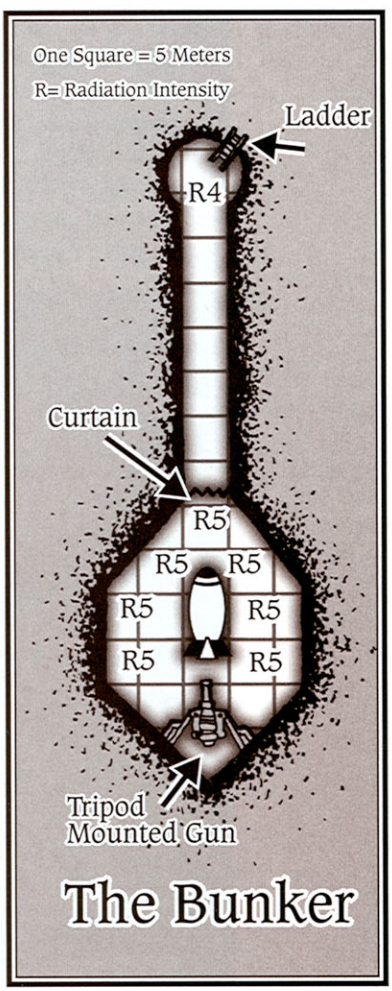
**Defenses**
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

**Skills**
Stamina [10]—*endurance* [16].

The heroes should find the Makkiadorras' landing site on Isla Grande, along with a set of boats tied up on this side of the straits. One vaka carcass lays on the scorched earth, its flesh charred by the flames. Its eyes are goggled in madness, just above a torn blindfold. The heroes may follow the trail south for eight hours until they reach the neo-fascist Makkiadorras.

## SCENE 5: THE MAKKIADORRA BASE

After eight uncomfortable hours on the burning Terror del Fuego, the heroes crest a rise and reach the Makkiadorra base. They should have no trouble sneaking up the hill and casing the base, as there are no sentries and the vaka herd can be heard a kilometer out. When they arrive, the heroes will learn of the surprise that awaited the mutant ranchos




**CORTEZ**
Level 13 Android Diplomat (Combat Spec)
STR 14 (+2) INT 15 (+3)
DEX 12 (+1) WIL 12 (+1)
CON 12 PER 12
Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 16
Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Good/3 Last Resorts: 2
Mutations: None

**Attacks**
Flechette submachinegun 14/7/3* d4w/d6w/d4m HI/0
Unarmed attack 16/8/4 d6+2s/d6+4s/d4+2w LI/0
* -1 step bonus (Combat Spec bonus)

**Defenses**
Bulletproof vest and helmet: d6-2/d6-2/d4-2
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee and mental attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+3 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

**Skills**
Athletics [14]; Melee Weapons [14]—*blade* [16]; Unarmed Attack [14]—*power martial arts* [16]; Ranged Weapons [12]*—*pistol* [13]*, *rifle* [13]*, *submachinegun* [16]*; Stamina [12]; Survival [12]; Computer Science [15]; Demolitions [15]—*disarm* [16], *set explosives* [16]; Knowledge [15]—*deduce* [16]*, *ancient language* [16]; Medical Science [15]—*surgery* [16]; Tactics [15]; Technical Science [15]—*jury rig* [16]; Awareness [12]; Investigate [12]—*interrogate* [13]; Resolve [12]—*mental resolve* [14]; Culture [12]—*diplomacy* [14]; Deception [12]; Interaction [12]—*bargain* [14], *intimidate* [14]; Leadership [12]—*command* [14].
* -1 step bonus to Ranged Weapons and analyze artifacts (Combat Spec bonus and Android bonus).

**Gear**
Neutralizer helmet (provides the Psychic Void mutation), cybernetic trauma pack and comm gear.

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when they made the hasty decision to join the anti-mutant Makkiadorras.

The entire base is newly arranged as a slave pen for harvesting beef. The camp contains two dozen anchored tents made of fireproof rubber, all with the now-familiar "X" logo. The tents are arranged around a large rock bearing an obvious metal door. Inside a massive barbed wire enclosure, ten unhappy ranchos are forced at riflepoint to tend to the needs of three hundred cows. Ten humans in black leather and swastika armbands stand just outside the range of the vakas' auras, while twenty more patrol other parts of the camp and ten sleep during the day. The android Cortez barks orders at the others. He wears black leather, a helmet, and a harness, and carries a complicated gun. The helmet protects him from mental attacks, the harness is force field generator, and the gun is a flechette SMG.

A frontal assault likely will result in several hero fatalities. The Makkiadorras see great hopes for conquest under their new leadership, and will fight with confidence while either android is present. They give up if Cortez is killed, but with his armaments, that is easier said than done. The heroes may have to use cunning to win this fight. One way is to wait 'til nightfall when only Cortez and ten Makkiadorras patrol, though a gunfight will wake everyone up in two rounds. Another idea is to capitalize on the ranchos as potential allies. The ranchos fear pain, but fear slavery more. They can fight with their vaka goads, and if separated from the herd, they can unleash a powerful Empathic Symbiosis, affecting every non-android in the camp with wild rage. And of course, the rancho could stampede the herd if the fence comes down. The GM should adjudicate the success of other attempts to disrupt the camp.

Cortez continues fighting as long as his odds are good. But if chaos erupts, he will open the door in the rock and attempt to seal it behind him, using his force field to surround the door. As he closes the door, he will threaten, "You will not slay Mein Fuhrer!" Once sealed, the door is difficult to open. An Amazing success on a Strength feat check will suffice, and each person helping the opener gives one step of bonus to the die roll. It has 20 durability points, and subtracts 6 points from any attack against it. The ecobot can sense significant radiation inside and will want to eliminate the source, though it can be ordered to stand down. If the bunker is breached, see the next section.

**RANCHO**
Level 1 Mutant Nonprofessional
STR 9 (0) INT 7 (0)
DEX 7 (0) WIL 7 (0)
CON 10 PER 4
Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action check: 8
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 # Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 Last Resorts: 0
Mutations: Empathic Burst: Hatred*, Empathic Symbiosis* (allows transference of Hostility Field, implanting a Suggestion to attack), Mental Domination* (creatures of INT 3 or less only), Unified Mind (for asterisked mutations, each rancho gives a cumulative -1 step bonus to all others), Rejuvenation, Hostility Field (5 meters)

**Attacks**
Vaka goad 10/5/2 d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w LI/0

**Defenses**
Rawhide jacket: d6-3/d4-3/d4-2

**Skills**
Athletics [9]; Melee Weapons [9]—bludgeon [10]; Movement [10]—*trailblazing* [12]; Stamina [10]—*endurance* [12]; Survival [10]; Animal Handling [7]—*riding* [8], *vaka training* [12]; Investigate [7]—*track* [8]; Interaction [4].

**Gear**
Vaka goad (basically a pointed stick), brown rawhide jacket, packets of vaka jerky.

## SCENE 6: THE LAST REICH

If the bunker door is breached, only background (R2) radiation floods out. No damage occurs, but the ecobot girds for action and the ranchos goad the herd away from the source. The sound of lightning and metal will waft from somewhere below. The metal rungs of a shaft lead down into darkness, with but flashes of light at the bottom.

Garza/Hitler conducts an experiment, which if fruitful will let him rule or destroy much of Gamma Terra. The Nazi scientists left in the bunker the only working model of the German atom bomb, though not the plutonium or technology to refine it. Having located drums of plutonium-rich uranium, Garza/Hitler has juryrigged machinery to pump electricity into the bomb casing as he pounds uranium with a stream from a gun called a fission cannon. This creates an R5 environment. The android wears a Racal suit for protection, though without shielding, this has left him with "Ill" radiation poisoning effects (+2 step penalty to all actions).

This is a dangerous environment for the heroes. If present, the ecobot whirs into action, counting the radiation level in "R" terms for the heroes. At the middle of the 50 meter descent, the radiation intensity moves from R2 to R3. This requires Constitution feat checks each day, but is unlikely to cause harm if the heroes never venture deeper.

The bottom of the shaft is another story. In the lighted 30 meter corridor, the heroes encounter R4 radiation levels, requiring feat checks every hour or portion thereof (again triggering warnings from the ecobot, if present). The corridor leads to an X-marked curtain, behind which come streaks of lightning and sounds of machinery. The vark e-suits will lower the effective R-level for heroes, but the ecobot, though immune, is not effective shielding.

The curtain bears a black swastika on a white background inside a red circle. Pulling back the curtain reveals an awesome sight. On an elevated platform, an man in a yellow e-suit cackles in an unknown language as he fires a huge tripod mounted beam gun into the shell of a glowing bomb-like device. Electrical wires and metal extend from the floor and ceiling to the device, crackling with electricity. If Cortez made it down here, he'll also wear an e-suit.

If the heroes break in, they must make Constitution feat checks against the R5 radiation immediately, and every minute thereafter. (See tables GW29–31 in the GAMMA WORLD *Campaign Setting*.) Within 5 meters of the bomb, feat checks are made at a +2 step penalty. Laughing in German, Cortez and Garza/Hitler will fire their guns at the heroes, Garza's fission cannon requiring yet another Constitution feat check and eliminating the onset time for the effects. The fission cannon never runs out of ions for ammunition, but he has a machine pistol for backup anyhow.

With the radiation intensity, the heroes have but a short time to act. The ecobot, if here, will run in to smother the

bomb and cannon with foam, but as soon as it enters it will be engulfed in electricity, spraying the walls with foam.

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Anyone touching the floor or the electrified ecobot suffers points of 1d6+3 points of energy damage per round from the electricity. This gives a -2 step penalty to any attempts to disarm the bomb.

The GM should remember that Hitler may be crafty and charismatic, but he is also insane. If Garza/Hitler is struck for lethal damage or incapacitated, he will use a Last Resort point to strike the bomb canister and start a chain reaction. The heroes see the glowing bomb casing erupt in sparks, and Garza/Hitler issue one last demonic cackle. The heroes then have ten rounds before the bomb blows, which the ecobot will count down if present. Smothering the bomb does no good. The only possibilities are to disarm the bomb, destroy it (50 points of wound damage), or contain its explosion. If the heroes run for the shaft and scurry up the ladder, they'll likely close the door with seconds left.

If an explosion occurs with the door open, a cone of 10d6 points of HI damage and R5 radiation blasts out 100 yards from the bunker. If the door is closed, the explosion channels along the fault line, causing a quake. This causes the ground to shake, but if the heroes stampede the vakas north, they will get far enough away when the eastern chunk of Isla Grande falls into the sea. Make it close and dramatic, and then end the adventure, with the heroes only vaguely understanding that they've just stopped history's most destructive madman for the second and final time.

And perhaps just as importantly, they've got their cows back. ■

**GARZA/ADOLF HITLER**
Level 20 Android Diplomat (Tech 0p)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 12 (+1) | INT | 15 (+3) |
| DEX | 10 (0) | WIL | 14 (+2) |
| CON | 14 | PER | 14 |

Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 13
Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 # Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2
Mutations: None

**Attacks**
Machine pistol 11/5/2 d4+1w/d6+2w/d4m HI/0
Fission cannon 13/6/3 (requires CON feat check for R5 radiation)

**Defenses**
Racal radiation suit and helmet: d6-3/d6-4/d6, immunity to R1-R3 radiation, R4 becomes R3, R5 becomes R4
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+3 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+2 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks

**Skills**
Athletics [12]; Heavy Weapons [12]—*direct fire* [13], *indirect fire* [13]; Ranged Weapons [10]—*pistol* [11], *rifle* [11], *submachinegun* [11]; Vehicle Operations [10]—*land vehicle* [14]; Stamina [11]; Demolitions [15]—*disarm* [16], *scratch-built* [16], *set explosives* [16]; Knowledge [15]—*deduce* [16], *ancient language* [16], *ancient lore* [16]; Law [15]; Tactics [15]—*cavalry* [16], *infantry* [16]; Technical Science [15]—*artifact knowledge* [16], *repair* [16]; Animal Handling [14]—*riding* [15]; Awareness [13]; Investigate [14]—*interrogate* [16]; Resolve [14]—*mental resolve* [16]; Street Smart [14]; Teach [14]; Culture [14]—*diplomacy* [20]; Deception [14]—*bluff* [20], *bribe* [20]; Interaction [14]—*bargain* [20], *charm* [24], *intimidate* [20], *taunt* [24]; Leadership [14]—*command* [24].
* -1 step bonus to analyze artifacts (Android bonus).

**Gear**
Neutralizer helmet (provides the Psychic Void mutation), cybernetic sensor gauntlet and comm gear.

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**PAPA GAYO**
Level 6 Male Loro (Mutated Parrot) Diplomat/Free Agent

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 4 (-2) | INT 14 (+2) |
| DEX 15 (+3) | WIL 13 (+2) |
| CON 7 | PER 12 |

Durability: 7/7/3/3 — Action check: 16/8/4
Move: fly 20, run 4, walk 2 — # Actions: 2
Last Resorts: 3
Mutations: Increased Precision, Mimicry (allows imitation of any sound heard within 24 hours), Photogeneration (uncontrolled—feathers glow in darkness), Danger Sense, Illusion Generation, Kinetic Shield, Telepathic Blast

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beak or claw | 6/3/1* | d6s/d4-2w/d4w | LI/0 |
| Vibro blade | 6/3/1* | d6-1w/2d6-2w/d4+1w | En/G |

* -1 step bonus (Increased Precision)

**Defenses**
-2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+4 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks (including Free Agent bonus)
+2 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills and mental attacks

**Skills:** Melee Weapons [4]*—**powered weapon** [6]*; Unarmed Attack [4]*—**brawl** [6]*; Acrobatics [15]—**dodge** [16], **flight** [16]; Knowledge [14]—**deduce** [16], **ancient language—spoken only** [16], **ancient lore—pre-1800 military history only** [16]; Tactics [14]; Awareness [13]—**intuition** [14]*; Teach [13]; Culture [12]—**diplomacy** [14]; Entertainment [12]—**sing** [13]; Interaction [12]—**bargain** [14], **taunt** [14]; Leadership [12]—**command** [14].
* -2 step bonus to these skill checks (Danger Sense and Increased Precision).

**Gear:** Vibro dagger (5 uses available), 10x telescopic sight used as a monocle (cannot be mounted on a gun)

**Description:** age 44, 50 centimeters tall, 4 kg, bright green and yellow feathers that glow green at night, red eyes

**Attributes:** Yearn to learn, ethical, talkative, curious

**Autobiography:** While other members of my species flit among the trees and clouds, I attend to more important business down on the earth. I am an elder on the council of Rio Gallegoz, a free city on the south end of the Latin Continent. As the only mutated animal on the council, my sage direction is solicited on matters of military strategy, for I am an expert tactician. I enjoy putting combat designs to the test, leading a mixed adventuring party in which I tolerate no appeals to racism, purism, or any other -ism. Many nights, I unwind by telling the young ones of battles past by the soft glow of my feathers. My knowledge of the military history of the Ancients gives me my rank in Rio Gallegoz. A wise old owl who could read the Ancients' puzzling language told me delightful stories from a book on historic battles. The dog-eared book lacked many pages, and ended about the time of something called the "American Revolution." I'm not sure what an American is, or what makes one revolve, but I absorbed as much as I could prior to that point. I don't know what happened between that revolution and the Cataclysm, but am content with a knowledge of Xerxes, Hannibal, and Richard the Grizlionheart (or somesuch).

*ILLUSTRATIONS BY COREY MACOUREK*

**MERZEDEEZ ("MERCY")**
Level 4 Female Pure Strain Human Combat Spec

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 13 (+2) | INT 11 (+1) |
| DEX 14 (+2) | WIL 9 (0) |
| CON 12 | PER 8 |

Durability: 14/14/6/6 (includes Action Check Increase) — Action check: 16/8/4
Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 — # Actions: 2
Last Resorts: 1 — Mutations: None

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spiked rollerball gloves | 14/7/3 | d4+4s/d4+5s/d4+2w | LI/0 |
| Magnum revolver | 16/8/4* | d4+2w/d4+2w/d4+2m | HI/0 |
| Tangler pistol | 16/8/4** | | |

+2 step penalty to STR & DEX checks and half Move/double effect/immobilization
* -1 step bonus (Combat Spec bonus)
** -2 step bonus (Combat Spec bonus and Accuracy bonus)

**Defenses**
Rollerball padded armor and helmet: d6-1/d6-3/d6-4
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee and ranged attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
-2 step bonus to checks against radiation

**Skills:** Armor Operation [13]; Athletics [13]—**jump** [14]; Melee Weapons [13]—**bludgeon** [14]; Unarmed Attack [13]—**brawl** [14]; Acrobatics [14]—**dodge** [16]; Ranged Weapons [14]*—**pistol** [16]*; Movement [12]—**race** [13], **swim** [13]; Stamina [12]—**endurance** [13]; Animal Handling [9]—**riding** [12]; Awareness [9]; Interaction [8]
* -1 step bonus to Ranged Weapons skill checks (Combat Spec bonus).

**Gear:** Rollerball padded armor, rollerball helmet with opaque visor, spiked gloves, magnum revolver with 20 bullets, tangler pistol with 4 shots, pouch with 40 bullets, 10x binoculars, necklace with Mercedes symbol, 38 gold pieces

**Mount:** "Rayo," a potro (armored horse): sprint 28, gallop 18, trot 6; durability 16/16/8/8; hooves (Animal Handling—*riding* skill check) d6s/d6+2s/d6w; natural armor d6+1/d6/d6-2; bears a bedroll, saddle, and provisions

**Description:** age 24, 2.1 meters tall, 90 kg, muscular frame, black hair, brown skin, black eyes, steely gaze

**Attributes:** Deeper meaning, just, zealous, courageous

**Autobiography:** I'm the granddaughter of a founder of Rio Gallegoz, a mixed city on the south coast of Arjentina. My grandfather carved this city out of the hostile land, defending it against many attacks. These days, most bright creatures either come in peace or leave in pieces, so my generation hasn't gone to war. This is how I like it, as I much prefer being an explorer to a soldier. But when push comes to shove, I'm all business, preferring to take prisoners rather than kill—hence my nickname, "Mercy." That quality is rarely seen in my pet, a mutated jaguar named Delgato. She is aggressive and easily distracted, but a good companion out in the wilds. I wear the armor of a more civilized time, when great nations sent their champions into arenas and resolved global differences through individual or small-group combat. At least that's how I understand the Ancient ritual of "rollerball." The armor and spiked gloves prove the ritual was fatal for at least one side, but it seems more rewarding than the inexplicable Cataclysm that created Gamma Terra. With luck, I can maintain the peace of Rio Gallegoz as a tribute to the glorious time of rollerball.

**VAZKEZ**
Level 4 Male Mutant Tech Op

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 9 (0) | INT 13 (+2) |
| DEX 11 (+1) | WIL 11 (+1) |
| CON 8* | PER 8 |

* includes Skeletal Enhancement bonus

Durability: 8/8/4/4 — Action check: 13/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 — # Actions: 2
Last Resorts: 1
Mutations: Electric Aura, Skeletal Enhancement, Magnetic Control, Photokinesis, Psychometry, Minor Physical Change (blue pigmentation)

**Attacks**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Metal gloves 9/4/2 | d4+3s/d4+4s/d4+1w | LI/0 |
| Needler pistol 12/6/3 | d4s/d4+1w/d4+2s | LI/0 |

(CON feat check to resist paralytic poison on table GW28, treating days as hours and hours as minutes)

**Defenses**
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged and mental attacks
+2 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Half damage from unarmed attacks, blunt attacks, and falls (Skeletal Enhancement)

**Skills:** Unarmed Attack [9]; Manipulation [11]; Ranged Weapons [11]—**pistol** [12]; Demolitions [13]—**disarm** [14]; Knowledge [13]—**deduce** [16], **first aid** [14]; Physical Science [13]—**physics** [14]; Technical Science [13]—**artifact knowledge** [16], **juryrig** [14], **invention** [14], **repair** [16]; Animal Handling [11]—**riding** [12]; Awareness [11].

**Gear:** White lab coat, metal gloves, belt with two sportsacs, needler with 18 shots paralytic poison, specialized toolkit, solar pocket calculator, glow cube (6 hours left), wind-up alarm clock, cellotape dispenser, mini-stapler with 14 staples, nailclipper, reporter's notebook, golf pencil, dog whistles, 50 gold pieces

**Mount:** "Tecnico," a potro (armored horse): sprint 28, gallop 18, trot 6; durability 16/16/8/8; hooves (Animal Handling—*riding* skill check) d6s/d6+2s/d6w; natural armor d6+1/d6/d6-2; bears a bedroll, saddle, and provisions

**Description:** age 29, 1.7 meters tall, 70 kg, slight frame, yellow-green hair, blue skin, blue eyes

**Attributes:** Discovery, ethical, analytical, curious

**Autobiography:** I belong to a small society of technical experts working to keep the town of Rio Gallegoz safe and healthy. But while others in my cadre are bookish and long-winded, I prefer the open-air pursuit of technology to its closed-room experimentation. Items of the Ancients fascinate me, but there is more joy to be found in unearthing it from a shattered city than unearthing its secrets through complex research. I'm good at divining the complexities and histories of such items, but my combat mutations make me just as good in less intellectual pursuits. I believe in innovation in all things, especially adventuring. And so I am part of an adventuring band. Recent experimentation with a superpowerful glow cube made me very ill. I awoke after days in coma to find my skin had turned blue. I don't see this as a problem, but rather a reward from the Ancients for my interest in their creations. With hope, this boon will have no further disconcerting effects.

**DELGATO**
Level 3 Female Jaget (Mutated Jaguar) Combat Spec

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 10 (0) | INT 5 (-1) |
| DEX 15 (+3) | WIL 13 (+2) |
| CON 13 | PER 8 |

Durability: 13/13/6/6 — Action check: 13/6/3
Move: sprint 30, run 20, walk 7 — # Actions: 3
Last Resorts: 1
Mutations: Enhanced Senses, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Increased Precision, Increased Speed, Night Vision, Contact, Danger Sense, Induce Phobia, Telekinesis, Severe Phobia (canines), Toxin Intolerance

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 14/7/3* | d4w/d4+2w/d4m | LI/0 |
| Claw | 14/7/3* | d6+2s/d4w/d4+2w | LI/0 |

* -2 step bonus to unarmed attacks (Combat Spec bonus and Increased Precision)

**Defenses**
Fur: d6-3/d6-4/d4-2
+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
-1 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+2 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks
+2 step penalty to checks against poison or drugs

**Skills:** Athletics [10]—**climb** [14], **jump** [14]; Unarmed Attack [13]—**brawl** [14]; Acrobatics [15]*—**dodge** [16]*, **fall** [16]*; Stealth [15]—**hide** [16], **shadow** [16], **sneak** [16]; Movement [13]—**race** [14]; Stamina [13]; Survival [13]; Awareness [13]—**intuition** [14]*, **perception** [14].*
* -2 step bonus to these skill checks (mutations).

**Gear:** Jeweled choker worth 500 gold pieces

**Description:** age 11, 1.5 meters long, 50 kg, yellow fur with black spots, green eyes, manipulative forepaws

**Attributes:** All for love, selfish, aggressive, shiny object syndrome

**Autobiography:** Lived on the hunt, but no more. Lived with family, open plains, Patagon, humans called. Some water, birds to eat, no big dogs—well, a few, but stayed away from those. Family didn't, podogs, no more family. Much wandering, got here, Rio Gallegoz, humans called. Near sea, near plains, good hunting. Got good idea, could stay with humans and things. No big dogs—well, a few, but definitely staying away from those. Some water, birds to eat, good idea. Met woman, strong woman, Merzedeez, humans called. Got good idea, stay with woman, treated nice. Took necklace of shiny things from Merzedeez, Merzedeez said okay, got to keep necklace. Good idea. Get lots of good ideas, get more necklaces, says Merzedeez. Need to pay attention, brain-talk, not get pounced on. Pounce first. But not too soon. Find out what situation is, then pounce. Get good ideas, get other shiny things. Merzedeez in group, goes hunting sometimes. Got other humans, strange ones, and big horses, and one brain-talking big horse. And bird. Bird not to be eaten, bird gives orders. Bird not to be eaten. Remember. Bird not to be eaten. Good idea.

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**DEZPERADO**
Level 4 Male Mutant Combat Spec

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 11 (+1) | INT 12 (+1) |
| DEX 14 (+2) | WIL 10 (0) |
| CON 14 | PER 9 |

Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 16/8/4
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 3
Last Resorts: 1
Mutations: Increased Balance, Increased Precision, Photogeneration, Duality, Empathic Reflection, Telepathic Reflection, Weak Respiration (+1 cumulative step penalty to all actions for each round of combat after the first)

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Medium revolver | 15/7/3* | d4w/d4+1w/d4m | HI/0 |
| Riding lance | 12/6/3** | d4+3w/d4+5w/d4+1m | LI/0 |
| (Animal Handling—*riding* skill check for double damage on charge) | | | |
| Saber | 12/6/3** | d4+1w/d4+3w/2d4+2w | LI/0 |

* -1 step bonus (Increased Precision)
** -2 step bonus (Combat Spec bonus and Increased Precision)

**Defenses**
Bulletproof vest and helmet (with riot shield): d6-2(d6-1)/d6-2(d6-1)/d4-2(d4-1)
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks and encounter skills
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

**Skills:** Armor Operation [11]—*combat armor* [12]; Athletics [13]—*jump* [14]; Melee Weapons [11]**—*blade* [12]**; Unarmed Attack [13]*; Acrobatics [14]**—*daredevil* [15]**, *dodge* [15]**; Ranged Weapons [14]*—*pistol* [15]*; Movement [14]—*swim* [15]; Stamina [14]; Animal Handling [10]—*riding* [15]; Awareness [10]; Interaction [8]
* -1 step bonus to these skill checks (Increased Precision)
** -2 step bonus to these skill checks (Increased Balance or Combat Spec bonus/Increased Precision)

**Gear:** Kevlar bulletproof vest, clear riot shield, toreador helmet, two medium revolvers with 6 shots each, two bandoleers with 40 bullets each, lance, dagger, gun-cleaning kit, flask of wine, book of matches, sunglasses, 25 gold pieces

**Mount:** "Cabayeti," an intelligent potro (armored horse)—Cabayeti is one of this team's heroes

**Description:** age 24, 1.9 meters tall, 85 kg, lithe yet muscular frame, black hair, brown skin, brown eyes

**Attributes:** On a mission, gallant, independent, romantic

**Autobiography:** Once there were legendary men who drifted from town to town, stole what was needed, then gave the spoils to the people. Donkey Otee, Psi-Mon Bolivarr, Shayga Vara: These were the heroes of the Latin Continent on which I make my home. Since they attacked the powerful, it's unclear how these men avoided death—something tells me they didn't. Nonetheless, there's something there to be emulated, the spirit of serving people in a land where the odds are stacked against them. With my powers and skills, I've become one of those men, after a fashion. I work to help my town of Rio Gallegoz, as a member of an adventuring party. Since my lungs give out quickly, in combat I try to deliver the flashiest, most powerful punch I can early on. This is usually some combination of trick riding, light flashes, and double-barreled firepower. In so doing, I've forged a symbiotic relationship with my steed and ally, Cabayeti. This powerful and intelligent mutant horse is a true partner in my struggle to do good for the people.

*ILLUSTRATIONS BY COREY MACOUREK*

**CABAYETI**
Level 4 Male Potro (Mutated Horse) Free Agent

| | |
|---|---|
| STR 19 (+5) | INT 8 (0) |
| DEX 9 (0)* | WIL 7 (0) |
| CON 17 | PER 7 |

* Includes Dermal Plating reduction

Durability: 17/17/8/8 Action check: 10/5/2
Move: sprint 35, gallop 22, trot 7 # Actions: 3
Last Resorts: 1
Mutations: Dermal Plating, Increased Balance, Increased Speed, Metamorphosis (human form only), Contact, Cryokinesis, Pyrokinesis, Attraction Odo

**Attacks**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 20/10/5 | d6+7s/d4+5w/d4+7w | LI/0 |
| Hooves | 20/10/5 | d6+6s/d4+4w/d4+6w | LI/0 |
| Rear Hooves | 20/10/5 | d6+8s/d4+6w/d4+8w | LI/0 |
| Trample | 20/10/5 | d6+9w/d4+7w/d4+5m | LI/0 |

**Defenses:** Dermal plating: d6+2/d6+1/d6+1
+6 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks (includes Free Agent bonus)

**Skills:** Athletics [19]—*jump* [20]; Unarmed Attack [19]—*brawl* [20]; Acrobatics [9]*—*daredevil* [14]*; Movement [17]—*race* [18], *swim* [18], *trailblazing* [18]; Stamina [17]—*endurance* [18]; Survival [13].
* -2 step bonus to these skill checks (Increased Balance).

**Gear:** Riding saddle with saddlebags (1 week rations for ten, 3 bedrolls, 3 flasks oil, box of matchsticks, 20m rope, 3 sacks, 5 full waterskins, mirror, tent)—can carry 200 kg at full move, 350 at half move, and 500 at one-quarter move

**Description:** age 14, 2.5 meters high, 400 kg, white hair and mane, brown eyes, white armor plates, musk odor

**Attributes:** Trust in higher power, directed, calm, confident

**Autobiography:** As a potro, an armored horse of the Patagon plains, I expected to run with my herd or be tamed by the humans of Rio Gallegoz. What I did not comprehend is that unlike my brethren, I could comprehend this fate. Only rarely does a potro develop such intelligence as I have, to mention nothing of my strength and powerful mutations. The fate of such a horse is to link up with a rider who believes in the good of all. This I have done with Dezperado, a brilliant rider and marksman, who has joined with an adventuring party in Rio Gallegoz. His only weakness is a shortness of breath, which worries you. So say the potros, where the rider goes, so goes the potro. I have slowly developed a personality of my own in the past few years. It is I who gives this group its sense of duty. When a situation demands negotiation, it will occur. When one demands combat, no quarter is given. There is no point to belaboring fate, as sometimes hardship is our lot. There are two in this group who truly understand this: Rayo and Tecnico, the quite ordinary potros ridden by humans. But the others shall learn, in time.

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# elminster's everwinking eye

*A WAYFARER'S GUIDE TO THE **FORGOTTEN REALMS**®*

*BY ED GREENWOOD*

*Oh, the Slee are the mystery of the Border Kingdoms right now. Many folk would dearly love to know what really happened to them . . . and to the Mage-King. Rather fewer are willing to go to Ondeeme and ask a few pointed questions of the mages there in an effort to find out.*

*Shuldribrand Mroster*
*Mage Royal of Zindalankh*
*In conversation with Volo*
*Year of the Arch*

Our survey of Ondeeme concludes this month with a quick overview of the recent history of the realm that inevitably raises more questions than it answers.

## ONDEEME UNDER THE SLEE

Under the Slee-reinforced rule of the Mage-King, open lawlessness came to a swift end. The coastal uplands of Ondeeme remained a stronghold of the cruel and deceitful, but such evildoers perished swiftly or learned to behave themselves ëat home,' practising their cruelties in Calimshan and elsewhere. Ondeeman sheep farms grew prosperous once more, trade along the roads resumed and continually enjoys increasing briskness, and the stability of the reinforced rule swiftly brought real wealth to Ondeeme.

Blackalblade, the capital of the fledgling realm, became a place of wealth, hauteur, and real power. Its weavers and wool-merchants swiftly grew rich, and, as is the way of such folk, increasingly anxious to use their coins in places that weren't so firmly under the ready hand of the Mage-King.

As the influence of Ondeeme spread, distant eyes and ears turned its way, and agents of sinister cabals and organizations that hunger for power began to appear in the streets of Blackalblade. This interest caught true fire in 1368 DR, when the Mage-King announced the creation of his own school of wizardry, Tethtannar, atop the tor of that name north of Blackalblade in broken country known as ëthe Belt of Brambles' to the locals.

The stage was set for a great change in the Echo of Calimshan—a change that befell, when it came, like a thunderstroke.

## THE NIGHT OF DOOM

Someone or something of great magical power moved swiftly, striking in the winter of early 1369 DR to destroy Tethtannar in a single nightlong battle that set the sky afire with its fury. The blazing beams of the riven school had barely tumbled to earth before rumors swept the realm that the Mage-King was dead, and all his students with him. Some said the Slee also had perished, but others insisted they had rebelled against their master, subverted by Red Wizards or other, unknown powers or acting on their own behalf for the first time, after breaking the spell-thrall that the Mage-King held them in.

Whatever befell that night remains a mystery; all that can be said for certain is that Tethtannar remains in ruins, King Ondeeme has not been seen since that night, no foreign power declared itself openly in the months that have followed, and that all of the Slee vanished on that night, stayed unseen for some months—only to mysteriously reappear, resuming their collective rule as if nothing had happened.

During the "Months Without Magic," emboldened Blackalblade merchants hired mercenaries to put down thieves and slavers and keep order and mustered what magic items they could to cow the surviving Swords into obedience.

Though some Swords and citizens refused to recognize the authority of the uneasy alliance of merchants—and the usual struggle for power began within its ranks, resulting in over a dozen deaths and the rise of Inther Phorold and Jacklast Vraenoose to prominence as speakers for the merchants—things remained surprisingly calm in Ondeeme. A few brigands were put down, merchants who tried to strengthen their bodyguards into small armies were not-so-gently persuaded to abandon such efforts, and a few dopplegangers were unearthed from amid the wealthier citizens of Blackalblade. The widespread war and headlong influx of thieving guilds that many expected, however, failed to occur.

Phorold and Vraenoose weren't idle, either; they set out to entice more benign mages than the missing Slee (by offers of free housing and little taxation) to relocate from cities around the Shining Sea and settle in Blackalblade, to defend the riches of the realm against the many Borderer brigands who would inevitably begin to eye all the unguarded wealth once winter's jaws bit down in earnest.

One less-than-benign mage (Hlaundurym of the family Asarda, of Chessenta) arrived, dwelt for a month or two, and then left in haste without word as to why. Another power struggle among the merchants left Phorold dead and Vraenoose exiled, and a ruling council of eight governing Blackalblade. This council seemed to balance their hatreds and their needs, under the daggers-drawn-at-each-other leadership of "Lord" Astlur Adaunt, "the Old Matron" Nardarra Leonpur, and Ylothin Tlarst. As these three canny merchants eyed each other, the council continued the mage-enticing policies of their predecessors, and the realm began to—slowly, and ever-so-slightly—relax.

## THE RETURN

Much to the discomfort of minor wizards such as Jarorthlan of Sheirtalar and Ondalus of Calimport (who took houses in Blackalblade provided by the council and

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spread their wings to preen at a feast in which they were named Lords of the Empty Throne), the Slee reappeared before the year was half over, simply striding into Ondeemar and the other Swords' holds of the realm one morning as if they had never been away.

The realm remains abuzz with excited query: are these truly the Slee . . . or are they others, perhaps Red Wizards or Zhentarim or even Halruaans who've taken the shapes of the Slee? If so, why? What dark plots are they pursuing?

And what of the Mage-King? If he is dead, who now truly rules among the Slee, or keeps them from erupting into open war for supremacy among themselves? Is he undead, perhaps, transformed into a lich or something even darker, to watch over the Slee or continue his mastery of them? Or does he live yet, and merely retreated into very secure hiding, content to run his realm through the Slee? Was this whole affair merely a test, to weed out merchants and give angry Ondeemans a taste of the hard choices of ruling?

Was the destruction of the school the result of the Mage-King's pupils rising against him? Or did he plan Tethtannar as their death-trap all along, a mere ploy to lure them thence, where they could be stripped of magic and then slain, thus making Ondeeme a stronger realm because fewer mages remained to work against it or compete in spellhurling with its rulers?

Questions the realm has plenty of, but as the days and tendays and months drag on, it yet lacks answers. The Slee strike down dead any who dare to ask them about the Mage-King or Tethtannar or their recent absence, and the ranks of those who dare have now thinned to invisibility. Ondeeme holds its collective breath, watching and waiting for spelldoom—and worse.

For the time being, the two Lords of the Empty Throne remain in their new and palatial homes, not daring to emerge, and the Tower of the Mage-King in the Ondeemar remains dark and empty, the wind blowing through its bare rooms. The citizens of Ondeeme wait in hardly greater comfort, not knowing what to think . . . as do the Borderers who dwell around this realm of dark-hearted mages.

The Slee seem stronger in their magic, too, as if changed somehow—and no outsider can judge the extent of their present powers. Swords are sent racing around the land as if invasions are imminent, the Slee seem driven as if by a dark and onrushing fate only they can see, and at the heart of it all, Blackalblade sits in a tense calm, mirroring the decadent fashions of Calimshan.

Adventuring bands have begun to arrive, sidling around the inns and taverns of Blackalblade—and at least two of them have disappeared, too. Whispers are making the rounds in town that at least one of the bands dared to enter the ruins of Tethtannar, and were slaughtered by the Slee for their troubles. Other rumors hint at a search for the lost magic of the Mage-King, or that the Mage-King is assembling an army of adventurers to strike at archmages elsewhere who have magic he covets . . . or that this is all part of some dark plan that will see Ondeeme soon become the openly-declared outpost of Thay or another fell power.

Recent news that an extensive and ancient underground tomb, with its own magically-animated guardians, has been discovered on a southern sheep farm of the realm has made tensions even greater. Did the Mage-King found his realm here because of this great buried power, and probably more magic that the citizens know nothing of? Is there a city of drow mages, or spellhurling monsters, deep beneath Ondeeme? Do I dare to try to leave this land?

As time passes, the citizens of Ondeeme find no answers. Their eyes grow darker, their precautions greater, and fear can almost be smelled in the air. Everyone knows the days ahead must hold some answers . . . and that makes their fear all the greater.■

*Is the Mage-King undead, perhaps transformed into a lich or something even darker?*

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WARNING: some of the pictures and text on these Web sites may be disturbing to young and/or sensitive viewers.

What's a dungeon? In the classic fantasy campaign, a dungeon is a series of rooms and corridors which lie beneath a ruined castle or wizard's tower. The stereotypical dungeon is stocked with monsters, filled with traps, and littered with treasure for intrepid adventurers. But this definition is too limiting, especially when we're discussing modern role-playing campaigns. The definition I will use for a dungeon is a physical location the player characters can explore and where there are risks and rewards in carrying out the exploration.

For example, think about what could be going on behind closed doors at your local hospital. Are organs being harvested from healthy patients to replace organs of dying, but rich patients? Perhaps a group of ghouls has taken over the morgue. Possibly radioactive or alien materials are being used in experiments on unwitting patients. The security personnel, hospital staff, alarms, and surveillance cameras stand in the way of your heroes, but there are rewards for the investigation. The foes may be defeated or information gained on their plans for future raids by the characters. Money, equipment and even the gratitude of a rescued patient are other potential rewards for undertaking the mission.

What sort of hospital is most likely to be corrupted in this way? Why, a government-operated hospital, of course! Let's take a look at Walter Reed Medical Center, a well known hospital where the American President goes for treatment (and possibly alien programming). There is a map of the base at http://www.wramc.amedd.army.mil/welcome/basemap/. Maps of the hospital can be found at http://www.wramc.amedd.army.mil/welcome/map/; just what goes on in 4X10-X-Ray Special Procedures and the Pain Clinic? There are other interesting files at the U.S. Army School of Aviation Medicine Web site download page, http://usasam.amedd.army.mil/Downloadable/download.htm. A word of warning-some of the files are huge, including a thought-provoking 26 MB Power Point document on bioterrorism.

A modern adaptation of the typical fantasy dungeon is the subway system. A site featuring abandoned subway tunnels is located at http://www.cc.columbia.edu/brennan/rails/disused.underground.html. While this page is mostly text, the descriptions of how stations came to be to be abandoned could be helpful in developing a realistic background. There are links to related sites, including the unofficial New York subway site, http://www.nycsubway.org/lines/index.html. There are maps and photographs of subway tunnels and cars, as well as information and photographs on the construction of the subway. I found that the IRT Division provided the best information, and suggest you begin your search there.

Let's make a trip down under to Sydney Australia, site of the 2000 Summer Olympics. An excellent tool for creating a realistic campaign is the "Strategic Planning Linkup Around Sydney Harbour," or Splash. Set course for http://bearings.nsw.gov.au/front.html and click on Splash Maps (have patience, it takes a while to load). If you turn off everything except for Coastline, you can selectively include Elevation, Water Mains, Sewers, Roads, Buildings and other features. You can zoom in and out and focus on different parts of the city. I found the site to be fairly intuitive in use, although on-line help is provided. This site offers a lot of possibilities for the creative gamemaster.

Submarines have been used to good effect in several suspense films and certainly can be used in your campaign. A passenger on a submarine at sea is effectively trapped with his fellow passengers (friendly or hostile), which forces the heroes to rely on their wits. No one else can help you and you can't run to the store for a bigger gun. A submarine tour and variety of pictures can be found at the USS Mariano G. Vallejo home page, http://www.ssbn658.org/. The picture of the interior walls bowing in at depth, http://www.ssbn658.org/Pages/658photo3.html, would certainly make me think twice before spending any time in one.

This month's final site is a suggestion from reader Brian Snyder. Brian has been caving since 1985 and he wrote to say he'd enjoyed the article on spelunking the Internet. He suggested http://www.caves.org, the web site of the National Speleological Society. While much of the information on this site is of a scholarly nature, this would be an excellent starting point for anyone who wants to try caving in real life. The NSS Organizations page identifies a multitude of "grottos" (local clubs) you can contact in your area. For example, the Dayton Underground Grotto (located near me) has a web page at http://www.caves.org/grotto/dug/. In addition to information on the club, there is basic information on caving. The site has a link to http://www.topozone.com/. This site provides topological maps of the United States, which are useful to a variety of campaigns.

That's all for this issue; if you have any questions or suggested sites for future issues, please send them to polyhedron@wizards.com. ■

Billy has second thoughts about kicking the *sphere of annihilation*.

# internet 101

*MODERN DUNGEONS* *BY ED GIBSON*

02 .....ERIK'S EDITORIAL
03 .....NOTES FROM HQ
28 .....ELMINSTER
30 .....MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
31 .....INTERNET 101
32 .....READER SURVEY

# reader survey

*WE'RE HERE TO HEAR*

Please rank each article or section of the magazine from 1-5 with 1 being "What a lovely day!" and 5 being "It's a twister! It's a twister!" (In case you were wondering, 1 is bad, and 5 is good, dicechucker.) Please include any other comments you feel are appropriate. All responses received on or before October 1, 2000 will be entered for a drawing to win a free copy of FORGE OF FURY. Woo-hoo!

RPGA # _____ Name _____

| | RATING | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ARTICLE** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Erik's Ediorial | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Notes from HQ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Member Spotlight | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| So, You Want to Run a Convention? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| A Funny Thing Happened... | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Gamma World: Fire Island | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Elminster's Everwinking Eye | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Internet 101 | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

This one time, the Polyhedron staff went camping in the wilderness. David Wise and Robert Wiese set up the tent, Tom Ko took care of building the fire, and Scott Magner broke out the brats and steaks. Everyone ate and ate, fondly remembering the now-destroyed Food Court at Origins. Then, everyone went to sleep, leaving their pots and pans near the fire. This attracted bears, who came and ate the entire staff. The moral of the story: If you have trouble reaching the RPGA staff, it's possibly because they were eaten by wild animals.

**Polyhedron Reader Response #143**

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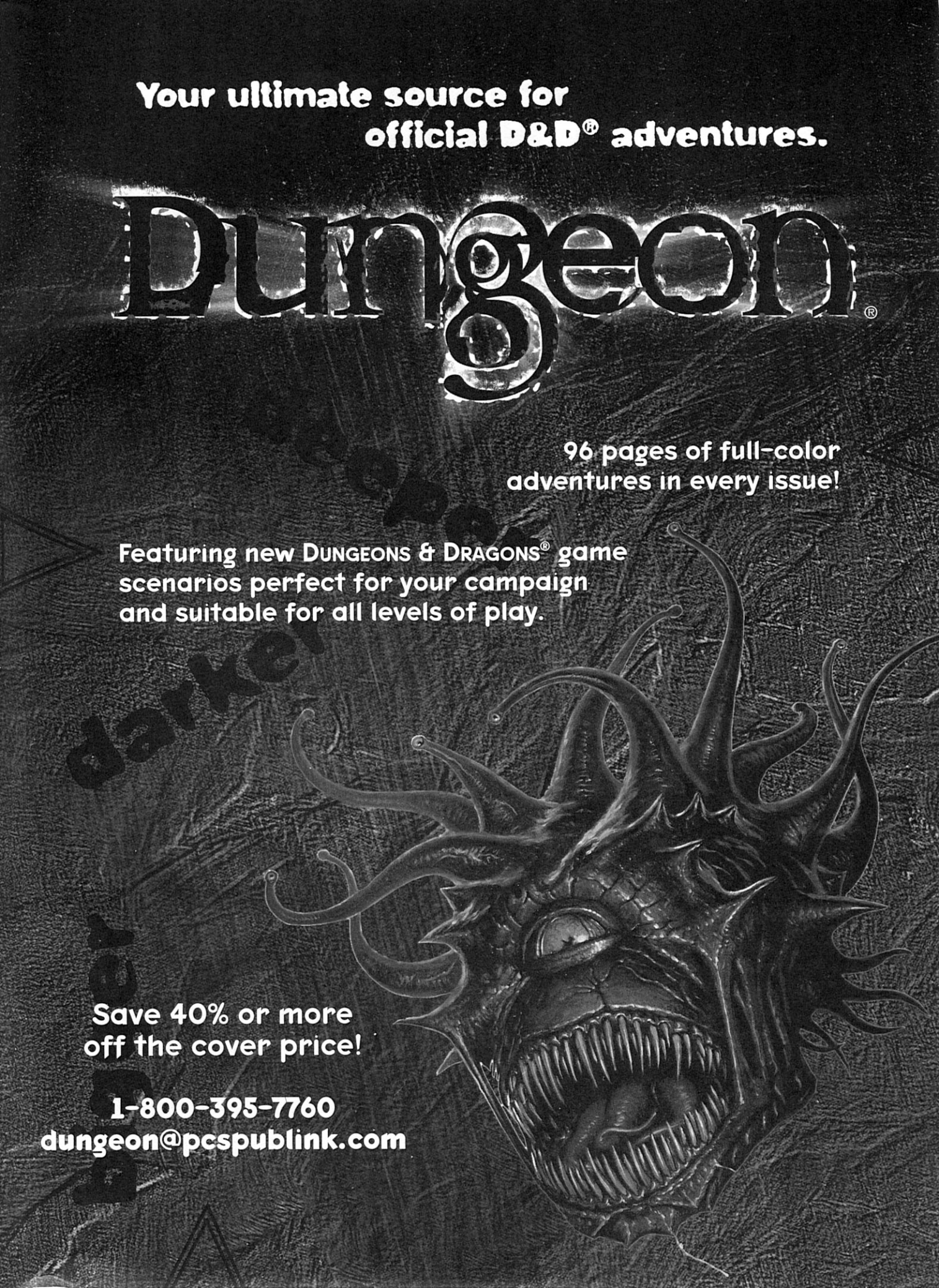
## COMMENTS

What's your favorite animal? Has an animal ever taken a bite out of you? What's the weirdest creature you've ever eaten? Oh, and tell us what you thought of the issue, too.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# PROJECT CATALOG

## Welcome to Project Catalog, the next step in the LIVING CITY™ conversion process.

In order to convert the campaign to the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, the staff needs a better idea of what's "out there." Project Catalog will give us this idea, allowing us to catalog a list of every "convertible" in advance of the conversion process, which should speed up everything for everyone. When Project Catalog is complete, the staff will have an up-to-date listing of all items that must be converted, which will help us determine what will, and what will not, convert come 2001's GEN CON® Game Fair.

So, what does this mean to you? Simple—if it is not on the list by December 1, 2000, then the item will NOT be considered for conversion to the new game system. If you attempt to try to convert an item that is not on the list during the conversion period next year, the certificate will be sent back to you unconverted.

**How do you check to see if your items are all on the List? Easy.**

1 Log on to www.rpga.net/projects.
2 Click on the Project Catalog link.
3 Review the listing of magical and mundane items.
4 If you have something that is not listed, use the handy form provided on the site to inform the Conversion Staff of your unrecorded item. In the form, you will put your name, RPGA Number, Item Name and where the item came from. Then, you must to send us a copy of the item, so that it can be included in the List.

**Item Submission**

Internet: You can scan the certificate and email it to Project-C@rpga.net.
US Mail: You can copy the certificate and mail it to : Project-C 5610 Nike Drive Hilliard, OH 43026
Please include a valid address on the outside of your letter. Once the item is received, we will email you to let you know that it arrived.

**Now for a few Questions and Answers about Project Catalog:**

**Q** What if I do not have access to the Internet?
**A** Send $4 (check or money order please, no cash) to the Project Catalog address above and the Conversion Staff will mail out a printed copy of the GP Value Item List.

**Q** How often is the Web site going to be updated? I would like to send something in, but what if someone gets to it first?
**A** The plan is to update the site on a weekly basis (usually on Saturday or Sunday) with new item listings. There also will be a gallery that you can go to and see what people have "promised" to send in. If you see your item on that gallery, wait a few weeks. Most likely it will appear on the main lists shortly after the person who saw if first sends it in.

**Q** RPGA HQ has copies of all of the modules. Why can't you just get all of this from them?
**A** This is a good question! And the answer is that HQ does NOT have copies of everything that went out in the campaign. Many items were released at convention interactives and game events that, although sanctioned from HQ, were not CREATED by HQ. Therefore we do not have the master templates for these items, and need YOU to help us by sending them in. That way the item has a chance to be converted.

**Q** I have a certed animal from the Ravens Bluff Animal Shelter. Must these and other Meta Campaign issued items be turned in?
**A** No, we have the templates for all of the animals that have been given out since GEN CON 1999. We will be providing another site soon that will list all animals that we know have been given out in the campaign. Similar to this project, if you do not see Rover or Fido on that list, you will have to send them in so that they can be converted.Regarding the Meta-Campaign items and certificates (Knights, Land Office, Silent Network, Clerical Circle, Company of the Raven, Bards Guild, Wizards Guild and others): Generally speaking, we have copies of all of these certificates from GEN CON 1999 forward. If you have an older copy that you think might not be in our archives, contact the person in charge of that area and see if you need to send them a copy.

**Q** What is the deadline for Project Catalog?
**A** Project Catalog has a deadline of entry of December 1st, 2000. Items received after this date will not be included in the catalog. On January 1, 2001, the final listing of the Project Catalog effort will be published on the rpga.com and rpga.net sites, so that members will have an accurate GP Listing to use during gaming at Living City tables.

As you can see, Project Catalog is an important step in converting our campaign to the new version of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. Do your part by reviewing your inventory at www.rpga.net/projects today and get those unlisted items registered.

Thanks in advance on behalf
of the campaign staff!
Troy Daniels
Living City Chairman of the Board
Director of Plots